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Official Magazine - Australia

JANUARY ISSUE 2010
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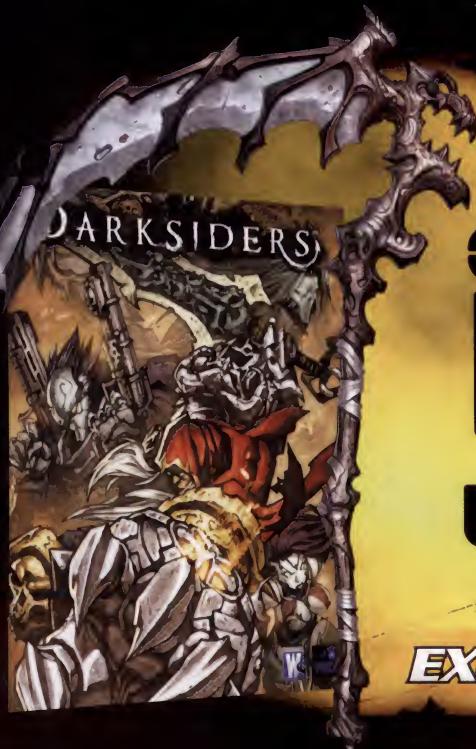
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NOAH

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PS3

PlayStation 3

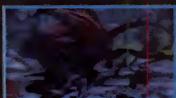


XBOX 360.

XBOX
LIVE.



THQ



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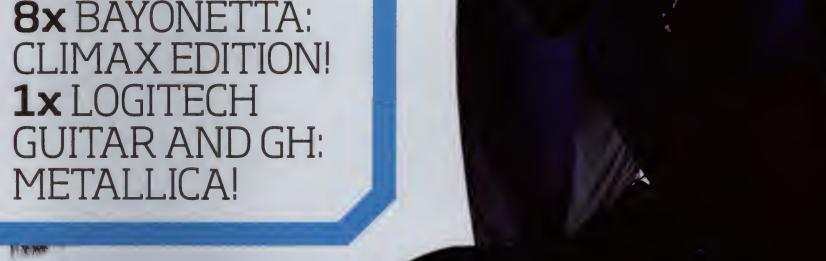
Aiming to turn shooters upside down – literally – by messing with gravity in post-apocalyptic world.

28 WIN!

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**8x BAYONETTA:
CLIMAX EDITION!**

**1x LOGITECH
GUITAR AND GH:
METALLICA!**



The woman
bringing a brand
new meaning to
killer heels

BAYONETTA
68



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WELCOME!

In a six-page epic SA Attorney General Michael Atkinson has detailed why he remains opposed to bringing our classification system up to world standards. Expect Angry Sackboy to break this one down next issue, but here are a few choice cuts.

"What the present law does is keep the most extreme material off the shelves. It is true that this restricts adult liberty to a small degree, however, I am prepared to accept this infringement in the circumstances."

"They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." Benjamin Franklin said that. It's a slippery slope Atkinson. Harry Potter is banned in schools across the United Arab Emirates. I don't require you to make my decisions.

"It has been suggested that games that would otherwise be classified R18+ are instead slipping through as MA15+ and becoming accessible to children. This argument does not support an R18+ classification for games."

Yes, it does. You argue it doesn't because the majority of gamers pay no attention to ratings and children are playing MA15+ rated games already. Your argument is invalid – the majority of gamers are over 18 and thus ratings are moot, and you have no evidence to suggest parents would be equally disinclined to allow children to play R18+ games as they are MA15+ games. Has that question even been asked? Come on.

LUKE REILLY
EDITOR

PSN: Capt_Flashheart **PLAYING:** MODERN WARFARE 2
Wanting: GRAN TURISMO 5

OPS ON: NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



STEPHANIE GOH

I will make the following promise to myself. If anyone pronounces it "supposably" they'll get a instant right hook to the chops.



PAUL TAYLOR

This year I'm fully committed to riding more rollercoasters, from crappy fairgrounds to the world's most notorious. All I need is someone to bankroll me.



JAMES COTTEE

My New Year's resolution? I resolve to eat like a pig, to drink like a fish, to smoke like a chimney, and to swear like a sailor. In that order. Possibly.



ADAM MATHEW

After playing Avatar in 'full 3D', my new year's resolution is 1080p. I don't want to just view games anymore. I want my eyeballs to *lick* the sky...

PSN: TBA
Playing: Darksiders
Wanting: Red Dead Redemption

PSN: paulgusta
Playing: Gravity Crash
Wanting: Modern Warfare 3

PSN: DrWho3987
Playing: Bayonetta
Wanting: Batman: Arkham Asylum 2

PSN: YourmumsAWESOME
Playing: Bayonetta
Wanting: Red Dead Redemption

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Gaming's latest and greatest



YOUR TV HAS BEEN FREEED

Record function = no more *MasterChef* purgatory

What is PlayTV? It's the device that turns your faithful PlayStation 3 into a Personal Video Recorder (PVR) and High Definition digital TV tuner.

Also sporting the ability to watch, pause and record free-to-air TV, PlayTV reinforces PS3's rightful place at the heart of your household's home entertainment needs. With twin HD tuners, PlayTV allows your missus to record *Packed To The Rafters* (or some other baloney) while you're happily recording the footy, or even playing a game or enjoying a Blu-ray movie. Everybody wins.

PlayTV will be available in Australia as you read this at a compelling recommended retail price of \$169.95 and is set to become a favourite on the gift lists in time for the festive season. Full run-through next issue.





13 WHERE TO NOW?
We take a look into the future of GTA episodic content



16 AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3
The events that shaped the console



26 ANGRY SACKBOY
This month's act of belligerence: kicking puppies

THE BEAT GOES ON

Despite a fairly modest launch on the PSP this October gone, Rockstar Games' *Beaterator* is popping back onto our radar screens thanks to its very surprising community service work.

It turns out that lucky kids in some NYC public schools are learning their musical chops by means of the phat beat making application, a whole lotta PSPs,

and a custom workshop being taught by Dubspot.

The students from the East Side High School in Manhattan are being instructed on not only just using *Beaterator*'s tools, but also creating fully fleshed out tracks. "They're able to learn music theory in a different format... it's the same information, just a



different way of presenting it," the class' teacher says. Free copies of *Beaterator* and PSPs have been provided to make the music happen. So... where was this support when we were in school? All we got was an Apple IIe, a bootleg copy of *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* and a smack in the mouth.



The Saboteur has made it out despite sabotage attempts. ↗

PANDEMIC VICTIM

According to an internal memo by EA Games Label Senior Vice President Nick Earl, Pandemic Studios (creators of *Full Spectrum Warrior*, *Mercenaries*, and the forthcoming *The Saboteur*) won't be closing so much as 'consolidating', apparently.

"I want to make it clear that the Pandemic brand and franchises will live on," wrote Earl in the memo. "In the months ahead, we will announce plans for new games based on Pandemic

franchises. This type of change can be difficult. But the situation calls for us to act decisively, to take control of our destiny and to run a stronger, more focused development operation. That's how we'll continue to make great games in our LA studios."

All of you Nazi-haters out there waiting for *The Saboteur* can heave a sigh of relief, because it is still coming to your PS3 as we speak... type... whatever.

The EA spokesperson also confirmed that the Pandemic

brand and franchise are still alive and well, and that EA is still very committed to it.

Started in 1998, Pandemic Studios was later bought by Electronic Arts in 2007 as part of a deal for which EA paid \$860 million for both Pandemic and Bioware. Pandemic is behind the design of many popular titles, including *Star Wars: Battlefront*, *Mercenaries*, and *Full Spectrum Warrior*. The studio's most recent game for EA, *The Saboteur*, will hit stores this month. Verdict next issue.

IN SHORT...



Britain now has a Digital Economy Bill that consists of a "three-strikes" rule that allows entire families to be cut off from the net if their IP is ever linked with a copyright infringement.



Kaz Hirai confirmed 'premium' level will be added on top of PS3 and PSP's online service, which will remain free to play online. Also, PSN revenue is expected to hit \$563 million this fiscal year.



Guerrilla Games (makers of *Killzone 2*) had a recent posting on their website seeking to hire a whole bunch of talented folks. We're all going to see *Killzone 3* sooner than we think, or something... else is happening.

WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



MW2

You made how much in less than a month? \$550 million?

Red Dead Redemption

This game continues to amaze us.



Rock Band

The office PS3 has 269 DLC songs. We're shocked.

Ken Block's STi Trax

Half Subaru WRX, half snowmobile, all awesome.



Adults only

Yes, we're still rooting in *Dragon Age: Origins*



G.I. Joe Laser Shock

Like laser tag, but with an electric shock.



Unfriend

This non-word is now actually a word. That's unpossible.



NEWS



GAMER TO TAKE ON ATKINSON

Banned game increases the need for an R18+ rating

Michael Atkinson, the South Australian Attorney-General and man many people see responsible for a lack of R18+ rating on videogames in Australia, will have a challenge for the seat of Croydon in next year's state election.

David Doe, employee of games developer Firemint, has established the Gamers 4 Croydon political party. He did so after the shooter *Left 4 Dead 2* (unfortunately unavailable on PS3) was refused classification and had its content significantly altered in order to be sold within Australia. Doe's motivation goes beyond just wanting to play an un-edited version of a game, but "to exert pressure on the Attorney General for South Australia, Michael Atkinson, as he is currently the only Attorney General voting 'no' against the introduction of an R18+ classification rating for videogames in Australia."

The edited version of *Left 4 Dead 2* immediately erases fallen zombie corpses on the ground, as well as stopping the player from cutting off limbs and heads, and heavily editing wounds. Sure it's violent, but the point is content being made available for adults who don't want to be treated as 15-year-olds, as well as the underlying concern of content not suitable for the maximum MA15+ rating being shorn in.

Whether or not the game in question is available on our system of choice, we applaud this move. It'll be a major shock if they can pull it off – Atkinson is firmly wedged in his seat and has been for 20-odd years – but this is one significant step towards Aussie gamers getting a much needed R18+ classification. At the very least it continues the discourse. You can find out more at www.gamers4croydon.org/home.

SCREENTEST: Your favourite games as movies

KATAMARI DAMACY

Is your ball big and sticky?

The Director

Jerry Bruckheimer

The Plot

The King Of All Cosmos, a belligerent drunk, has destroyed all the stars in the galaxy. A touch more irresponsible than hopping in a mate's Commodore half-tanked and writing off a Porsche or Merc. Still, the King needs to get the stars back in to the cosmos quick, and it's up to his son, the Prince, to do so. There's a catch: he has to destroy the Earth – or at least parts of it – to create new life with his magic sticky ball, the Katamari.

The Pitch

Armageddon but with fruity lines and fruitier costumes.

Green Light or Development Hell?

Whether you're happy to let Bruckheimer's brand of dumb action wash over you or would rather drown in a bucket of hot popcorn-butter than sit through the improbable destruction of all of

Earth's man-made wonders, the man does know how to turn a profit. *Katamari* is, essentially, a disaster movie. Millions of stars wiped out and Earth is the galaxy's saviour? It's the ultimate sacrifice!

Best Line:

The King of all Cosmos: "This sky is not pretty at all. It's rough and masculine. Possibly sweaty."

The Cast:

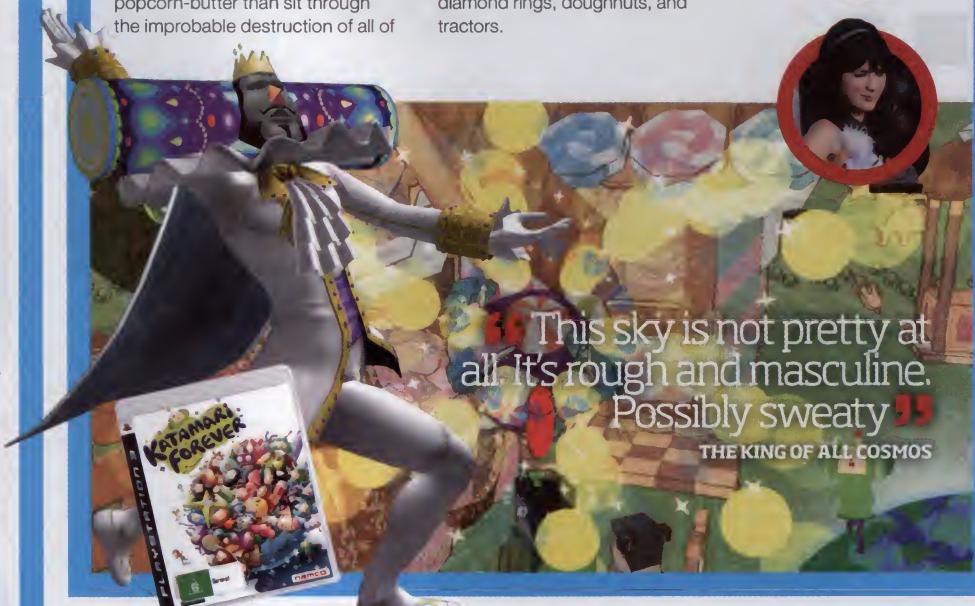
John Travolta as the main loony King Of All Cosmos

Elijah Wood as the diminutive and constantly harangued Prince.

Magda Subanski as the mute Queen of all Cosmos.

Tom Waits as Unfortunate Person #25 who is rolled up with pens, sushi and swans.

Zooey Deschanel as Unfortunate Person #84 who is rolled up with diamond rings, doughnuts, and tractors.



NUMBER CRUNCHING

60m

Gran Turismo 5's budget in \$US

SEPARATED AT BIRTH

NO. 11 Cameron Diaz – spectre of the past Maria



There's certainly something about Maria. Both her and Cammy are blonde, have big smiles, and are constantly taunted by pyramid heads... wait, that's not quite right. Still, minus the pyramids, the two are spookily similar. Depending on your psychic make-up, you could call Diaz the woman of your dreams, or nightmares.



grand theFT auto CHINATOWN WARS

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- Time Out

"Chinatown Wars is no mere spin-off. It's a legit and fully-fledged GTA game that pops with exaggerated realism."

- FHM

"...this is a masterpiece of handheld gaming."

- IGN

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and sexual references

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www.rockstargames.com/chinatownwars

R
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PSP.
PlayStation Portable

TOP 10 AWFUL NAMES FOR GAMES

Not everything is as simple as *Assassin's Creed* this or *Rock Band* that. From misnomers to mouthfuls, these titles prevent you from exchanging coin for games.



IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

Awesome game, woeful name. This is hopelessly unmarketable, mostly because only Russian airplane geeks know what an IL-2 Sturmovik actually is. It's not even that famous, compared to something pronounceable and recognisable like a Spitfire or a Mustang.



YS

Well done, you're unfathomably unpronounceable. Depending on which website you stumble across, they'll push either "eesse" or "eese", or some other such mangle of vowels and consonants, but the position of the stress is a mystery. Is it like the back end of 'cheese' or more 'ease'?



ATELIER IRIS 3: GRAND PHANTASM

"Hello, welcome to Your Local Game Emporium, can I help you?" "Yes, I'd like one of those *Grand Phantasm*, thanks" "Get out of my shop and take your filthy mouth with you". Tip: don't make your JRPG series sound like it's a porno.



.HACK

As gamers age, their collections are inevitably going to expand requiring some sort of organisation instead of the usual rat's nest of boxes. Where does this fit in? Is it 'h' for hack, or before the numeral section, or 'd' for dot? Shopkeepers, let us know. We're completely confused.



GUITAR HERO 5

No, no, no, Activision. This number five is actually 11, and there wasn't a *Guitar Hero IV*. Plus, you stopped using Roman numerals at the exact point when the number five would have been the shape of the Flying V, one of the coolest guitars in the world. Who made that call, damn it?



FROGGER: HELMET CHAOS

This conjures so many questions. What is the plot of this game? Why is a frog wearing a helmet? How come it's so damn chaotic? Fairly straightforward, we would've thought. Put it on your head, tighten the strap or buckle the clip, and you're away. This just makes so little sense it stops being funny.

HOLY INVASION OF PRIVACY, BADMAN! WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THIS?

We don't think there's been a game with such a long title. It's a nightmare to fit anywhere and the reliable trick of making an acronym, HIOPBIWDIDTDT? looks like the ramblings of a drunk with non-predictive text.



TACTICS OGRE: LET US CLING TOGETHER

This Japanese (of course) title is an ancient RPG whose main character's name is, incidentally, Gen X's favourite material, Denim. Unfortunately, it mostly sounds like the story of a groovy old soak who wants to get his paws on a nubile youngster for his pleasure.



NO ONE CAN STOP MR. DOMINO!

That erroneous exclamation mark skilfully negates the game's subtitle, *As He Inflicts Grievous Bodily Harm*. Mr. D roams around people's houses setting off traps where people are punched in the groin and blown up via a bomb in their oven. An analogy for procreation? Devious bastard.



MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: GUNDAM VS. ZETA GUNDAM

The kidz, we realise, were crazy for a bit of *Gundam* a few years ago. The name alone is like catnip, so to make a game triple-y as good, the suits at Capcom decided to bung three Gundams in there. It makes for an excellent substitute swear word, by the way.

WHERE TO NOW?

Our peers on the other side of the gaming pasture have had two additional chapters of the *GTA IV* saga to play through, so we feel it's about time we had some of our own. Here are a few suggestions, Rockstar.

GTA: ESCAPE FROM LIBERTY CITY

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

The environment of Liberty City is a fantastic interpretation of the real-life Big Apple – it's the perfect prop. We therefore think that it should be used in off the wall, interesting ways; much like New York City is employed in Hollywood films. Yes sir, what better way to salute the city than to build a wall around it and convert it into an open-air penitentiary for murderers and psychos?

THE STORY

Set in the terrifying "future" of the early '90s, this episode has you infiltrating the maximum security penitentiary of Algonquin Island to rescue the President. Nothing will prepare you for the crazies that come out at night, the godawful music choice of the cabbies, or the way everybody you meet insists on telling you they thought you were already dead.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Only a handful of working cars would be available, ammo would be scarce, and every con with a lead pipe would be baying for your blood. You may have the only gun in town, Snake – but how long is that gonna last you?

PROBABILITY

Chances: slim to none. For one thing Hideo Kojima has already seagullled the likeness of Snake Plissken for *MGS* – so there'd be a legal minefield right there. Mind you, Rockstar has done a game on an obscure cult-movie before (*The Warriors*). So anything's possible.

GTA: TERROR ATTACK

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

Too soon? Nah, Hollywood gets a free pass on this stuff anyway. Plus, if Ubisoft's forthcoming *I Am Alive* is anything to go by, disaster games may be the next big genre on the horizon. Trying to survive a horrific, destructive event in Liberty City – as opposed to, you know, 'creating them' yourself with a grenade launcher – could make for a very compelling change of pace.

THE STORY

If we may be so bold as to summarise our concept in five words: "crap exploding all around you". As long as there is utter bedlam in Liberty City it doesn't necessarily have to be some religious zealots parking a plane into a skyscraper; maybe they've triggered a nuke, or cut off every citizen's Internet access. Hell, we'd go mental if someone cut off our *porn* information flow.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Only one scene comes to mind: utter chaos, dogs and cats living in sin, mass hysteria. The folks in Liberty would quickly devolve into three categories: do-gooder rescuers, victims, and jerks who take advantage of the situation. Pick your option.

PROBABILITY

Like we mentioned earlier, *I Am Alive* is on the horizon, Rockstar could fire the first salvo and secure this genre battle, before it has even begun. They could make it their own too, with their signature humour, ultra-violence, and full frontal wang shots. Why that last one? Just to piss people off.

GTA: HOMELESS PRICK

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

When you step into the single shoe of a hobo you really are imbued with an almost superhuman power of social freedom. As a homeless person, the world of Liberty City is now your oyster (and urinal) like never before. Your missions entail cursing out hapless citizens, keeping yourself as maggoted as possible, and being a dick without anyone having the balls to stop you.

THE STORY

A drunk homeless guy doesn't need a backstory – he's given up on life and embraced the bottle instead. There's a certain amount of freedom to that, you could make up your own story for him. Maybe he was a failed investment banker, or a crazy scientist from the future, or he could just be your garden-variety, slack-arsed bum who got shunned from society.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

You know how *GTA IV* plays when you're drunk? Yeah? This'll be just like that – but in a constant state. Hallucination will play a huge factor too. You'll receive 'defecate on this' mission objectives from Sgt. Pepper, a Sasquatch, or a curious mixture of the two.

PROBABILITY

The drunk mechanics are already there, so that's 90 per cent of your work done, Rockstar. You just need to turn the effects up to 'Boris Yeltsin at Oktoberfest'. You also need a voice actor to portray a crazy, needlessly aggressive individual. Our recommendations: Gary Busey.

GTA: I AM LEGEND

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

Everybody loves a good post apocalyptic story where they can imagine themselves being the last person on the planet. The possibility of the things you 'could do' are quite an intoxicating lure. Couple this with waves of freaks that need to be shot, exploded, or run down like dogs with a sports car and you have every person's ideal videogame.

THE STORY

Somebody screwed up big time by killing off most of Liberty's populace and rendering the remaining survivors into nocturnal freaks. As the last 'normal' in the city you will get to play aircraft carrier golf and drive-by deer in a tricked-out muscle car by day, while mounting desperate defenses against a horde of freaks at night. Eerie during the day, and massively tense at night.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Like *Resident Evil* 5 times a thousand (which is, like, *Resident Evil... 5000*). Daytime will be comprised of frantic scavenger hunts for supplies and ammo, night time will be see you crapping yourself, or sniping up a storm with an NV-equipped rifle.

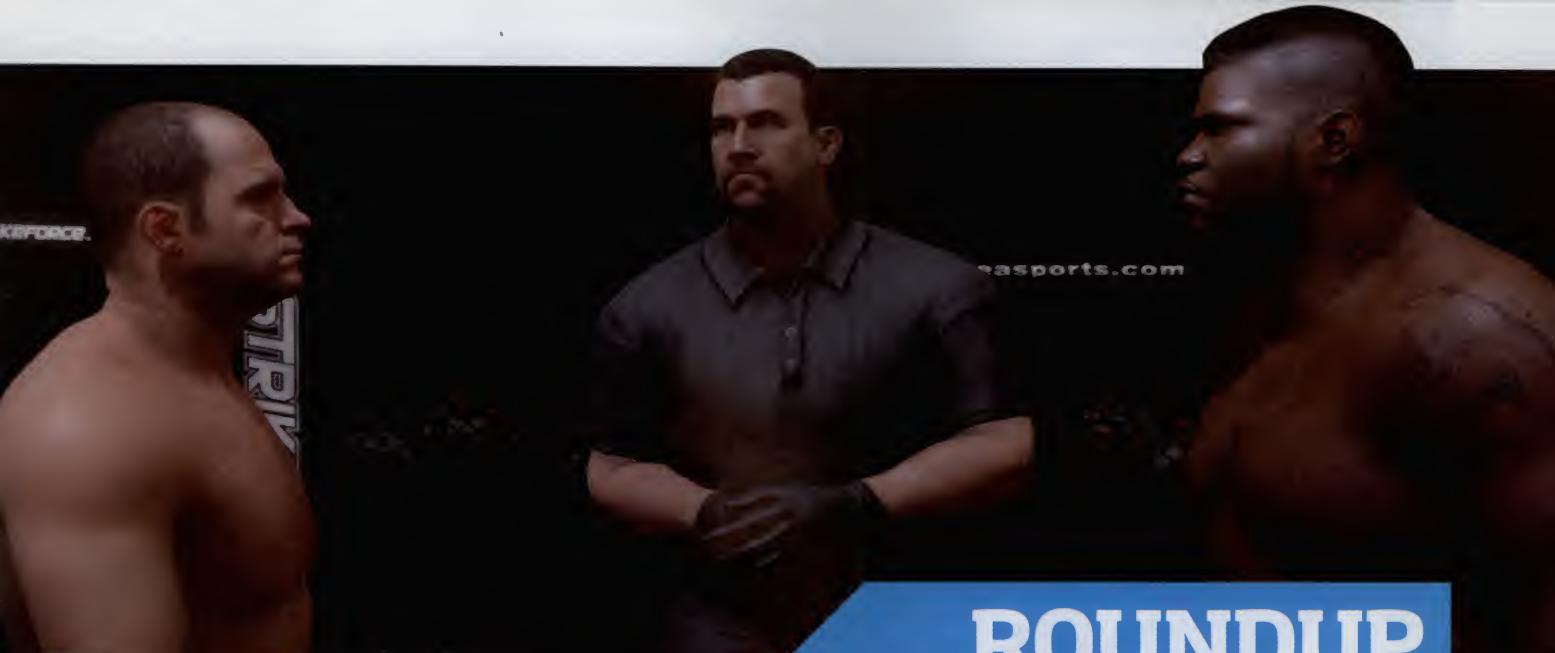
PROBABILITY

You never really know how lawyers are going to look upon a simple case of accidental copyright duplication. We would hope that Warner Bros.' legal representatives would be nice enough to let this slide – but, then again, we have found lawyers to be somewhat litigious.

EA SPORTS MMA

EA's answer to THQ's surprise smash *UFC 2009* has finally been glimpsed in action. Remember, it's from the minds that brought us *Fight Night Round 4*...





ROUNDUP

Everything else you need to know

IQ Interactive, the Danish studio currently at work on both *Hitman 5* and *Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days* (just announced, and recently teased in an unmarked video featuring a naked man crashing in a diner and punching an attacking dog) is also working on a multiplatform game that's "unlike anything else", according to CVG. The mysterious game has been in development for three years. It'll be violent.

Zipper Interactive's community manager, Jeremy Dunham, has announced on the US PS Blog that *MAG* (pictured) has entered its fourth Beta stage. According to Dunham over 6000 changes have been made since the previous Beta. That sounds like a lot to us, but with this kind of honing we doubt anyone will be able to claim the final product is going to be an untested piece of shit.

Square Enix big cheese Yoichi Wada has told gamesindustry.biz that the US and European versions of *Final Fantasy XIII* are in the final stages of development.

"We've completed the master of the Japanese version, and for the US and European versions we're just adding the final touches," he said. "The last stage of development has gone very smoothly this time."

The release date for Australia and New Zealand has also just been announced: it's March 9 2010.

Capcom has confirmed that the *Resident Evil 5* content announced at TGS in September will come to the PSN as DLC (rather than a physical edition) after a poll asking gamers what they would prefer.

According to Eurogamer.de, Guerrilla Games has confirmed *Killzone 3* on a Dutch TV show. Animation director Jan-Bart Van Beek was on the show and mentioned they are planning for a 2011 release.

Dhani Harrison (George Harrison's son) has told the Chicago Tribune that he's currently working on *Rock Band 3* with Harmonix, and the third outing the series is to be more realistic.

"I'm working on *Rock Band 3* and making the controllers more real

so people can actually learn how to play music while playing the game," he said. "Give me a couple years, it's going to happen."

We think he's probably exaggerating a bit – we doubt it'll change too much if it's going to be compatible with all the DLC released so far. Still, he sounds enthusiastic, which is good.

Polyphony Digital boss Kazunori Yamauchi has told Autoweek he and the *Gran Turismo 5* team have played *Forza Motorsport 3*.

"Some base components of the game are very different from *Gran Turismo*," he said. "It's a little bit different from what a simulator is. You can feel it when you drive it."

After trying it he did note that it still bears similar characteristics to his own driving game, but he has refrained from acting like a cock (unlike *Forza 3*'s creative director Dan "I have not seen anything that is even within years of what we're delivering here" Greenawalt).

After the surprise loss of nearly 1,500 jobs at EA, CEO John Riccitiello has also revealed during a conference call that "over a dozen" titles got the axe and that the company is aiming to reduce its overall game pipeline. He mentioned the second coming of *Medal of Honor* and confirmed the Criterion-developed *Need for Speed* will appear next year, but any game that didn't look like it'd sell really well has got the chop.

This likely caused the closure of Pandemic Studios also.



AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



FLORIDA, USA

"SHOTGUN FIRST CONTROLLER"

Naples Daily News reports that Kyle Yarkosky, 18, alleged that David Daniels, 18, along with another man, whom were supposedly both armed with assault rifles, kidnapped him. The two men struck Yarkosky and demanded he hand over cash. He was then driven to Wal-Mart where he was told to buy them a shotgun. But, when that wasn't available, they settled for a PS3. Americans.

PENNSYLVANIA, USA

THE MODERN APPROACH

Cops in Meadville, Pa. say a man went into a GameStop there at 7pm on Tuesday, informed the clerk he had armed help outside who'd start shooting if anyone called police, and to therefore start handing over 100 copies of *MW2* and over \$6000 worth of prizes. To hell with this finger-in-the-jacket-pocket fake gun crap. Just use your imaginary buddy as your accomplice.

ATHENS, GREECE

NIKO BELLIC STYLEZ

Greek police have arrested a heavily armed fugitive, Alket Rijai, who embarrassed authorities by twice escaping from prison in a helicopter. Rijai first escaped the Athens jail by whirly-bird in 2006. He was recaptured, only to escape by the same method in February. This reminds us a little too much of a *GTAIV* shenanigan.

ROME, ITALY

HAIL, GOD OF METAL

Italy's "Brother Metal", a 63-year-old monk who became famous for singing in a heavy metal band - habit and all - is leaving the limelight, saying the devil made him too much of a celebrity for his own good. Cesare Bonizzi fell in love with heavy metal and still thinks it can be a means to spread the gospel message of peace and love. *Guitar Hero* cameo?

DOWN UNDER

SALES (AND TEMPS) UP

The videogames industry in Australia in 2009 is poised to outperform last year's record breaking results.

The iGEA reckon that sales are up 8.3% over last year, according to official GfK figures. In 2008, Aussies gamers dropped roughly \$2 billion on their habit. It looks like we'll hit that benchmark for six.

INTERNATIONAL CHARTS

UK	
Source:	ELSPA
1	Modern Warfare 2
2	FIFA 10
3	Uncharted 2: Among Thieves
4	ProEvolution Soccer 2010
5	Need for Speed SHIFT
6	Tekken 6
7	R&C: A Crack in Time
8	WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010
9	Borderlands
10	DJ Hero

JAPAN	
Source:	VGChartz
1	Dragon Ball: RB
2	Winning Eleven 2010
3	Bayonetta
4	Need for Speed SHIFT
5	Tekken 6
6	inFamous: Akumeyi Takaki Otoko
7	Q&D4: Modern Warfare
8	3D Dot Game Heroes
9	Tales of Vesperia
10	Uncharted: Ougontou to Kieta

USA	
Source:	NPD
1	Modern Warfare 2
2	Dragon Age: Origins
3	Uncharted 2: Among Thieves
4	Tekken 6
5	Dragon Ball: RB
6	R&C: A Crack in Time
7	Madden NFL 10
8	Demon's Souls
9	Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2
10	NBA 2K10

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

DECEMBER 2009

PS3 Scene It? Bright Lights Big Screen
GENRE: FAMILY
DISTRIBUTOR: WBI

PS3 The Saboteur
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Avatar
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

JANUARY 2010

PS3 Bayonetta
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

PS3 Army of Two: The 40th Day
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Dark Void
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

PS3 Williams Pinball Classics
GENRE: PINBALL
DISTRIBUTOR: AIE

PS3 Darksiders
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

FEBRUARY 2010

PS3 BioShock 2
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

PS3 Dante's Inferno
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Aliens Vs. Predator
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

PS3 Vancouver 2010
GENRE: SPORTS
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

PS3 MX vs ATV Reflex
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

MARCH 2010

PS3 Battlefield: Bad Company 2
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Gran Turismo 5
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

PS3 Final Fantasy XIII
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

PS3 God of War III
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

PS3 Guitar Hero: Van Halen
GENRE: MUSIC
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

TBC 2010

PS3 Mafia II
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

PS3 Red Dead Redemption
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

PS3 Heavy Rain
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

PS3 ArcaniA
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: AFA

PS3 Blur
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

PS3 Castlevania: Lords of Shadow
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 RAGE
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Clash of the Titans
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 R.U.S.E.
GENRE: RTS
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

PS3 Saw
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 Split/Second
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: MADMAN

PS3 Enslaved
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 Alpha Protocol
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

PS3 Just Cause 2
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 Crysis 2
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: EA

PS3 Majin The Fallen Realm
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 Tony Hawk: Ride
GENRE: SPORT
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

PS3 Super Street Fighter IV
GENRE: THQ
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

PS3 L.A. Noire
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

PS3 Resonance of Fate
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

PS3 Singularity
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

PS3 Final Fantasy XIV
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: TBA

PS3 Agent
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

PS3 Max Payne 3
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

PS3 ModNation Racers
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

PS3 MAG
GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

PS3 Dead Rising 2
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

PS3 MotoGP 09/10
GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

PS3 Metal Gear Solid Rising
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

PS3 Super Street Fighter IV
GENRE: THQ
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

PS3 L.A. Noire
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

PS3 Resonance of Fate
GENRE: RPG
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

AUSTRALIAN CHARTS

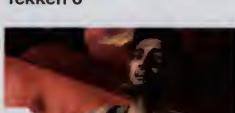
Source: GfK



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

QUOTE UNQUOTE

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"Doug Lombardi had to take a swipe at the PS3 again, and I thought it was foolish. I read the same way I read fanboys." **Gearbox** head honcho Randy Pitchford comments on Valve's usual PS3-related bitching.



"We'd never want to do that... That'd be the most counterproductive thing you could do I think." **Media Molecule** level designer Danny Leaver revealing that there are no plans for a *LittleBigPlanet 2*. Never is a pretty strong word.



"I think my LEGO character is wonderful. I want one... We had discussions about the hair, there were a few emails. They had to negotiate to use my likeness, but it's a nice thing." **Brian May** on *LEGO Rock Band*.



"I did in the last game a voice for a character called Gaz and in this game I'm now voicing a guy called Ghost who now just got a spin-off comic of his own and they're talking about another little game to go with it." **Craig Fairbrass**, voice of Gaz and Ghost.

FAVOURITES

ASHLEE ADAMS

Meet Ashlee Adams, an anomaly in the gaming world. Why, you ask? Well, for one she's a hardcore gamer and a self-confessed geek girl. Okay, not that unusual these days. Two, she's a *Final Fantasy* fanatic (especially *FFVII*), so much so that many iconic characters grace her body in tattooed form. Three, she loves anything to do with zombies, hates Ben Stiller and *LOLCATZ*, digs first-person shooters and has more than a little crush on *Resident Evil*'s Leon. Four, she's January's *Penthouse* Pet of the Month and currently the third most searched person on MySpace Australia. Oh, you didn't know that? Make no mistake though, she's not a hot chick who games a little, she's an avid gamer who just happens to be a sexy babe. There's a difference. Read on and find out!

OPS: So when'd the love affair with gaming start?

AA: I think it was when I got a Sega Master System for my seventh birthday, and I've pretty much been hooked ever since, playing *Sonic* and *Alex Kidd*, and never actually managed to finish it, so I'd like to track down a copy of it and try and knock it out now.

OPS: So would it be safe to say your love for gaming stemmed from the PSone days?

AA: Definitely. I still have a pretty large collection of PSone games, and I still play them all the time. I still have all the original copies from 10 to 15 years ago and I love going back and revisiting them.

OPS: We can see from your tattoos you're mad for *Final Fantasy VII* – take us back to where it all began.

AA: The first one I ever played was *FFVII*. I've gone back and played the earlier ones since then. Growing up in the country, there wasn't really anything to do, and I just remember that game absolutely consumed my soul. When I was about 13, I spent so many hours playing that thing. I'd tell Mum and Dad that I'd go to bed, wait for them to go to sleep, get back up and play it 'til 3am with the TV on silent.

OPS: What about the later versions? Any of those hit you as hard as the PSone installments?

AA: I haven't really enjoyed the later *Final Fantasy* titles. *FFIX* was okay, I didn't enjoy *FFX*, *FFX-2* was crap, but if *FFXIII* looks the goods I might have to go out and get myself a copy.

OPS: Being a curvaceous, strong young woman yourself, what's your opinion of the stereotypically top-heavy heroines depicted in videogames. You for it, against it?

AA: I'm definitely for it. I like that when you see a girl with big boobs and pretty, a lot of people just assume she's weak and a bimbo. I like it when they're turned into an intelligent, arse-kicking heroine. Like Lara Croft, for example, she's smart, rich, she's got big boobs and a tiny disproportionate waist, but she's awesome. I think if a real woman had proportions like Lara, she wouldn't even be able to stand up, let alone jump and dive and do handstands.

OPS: Lastly, any new titles eating up your time?

AA: I'm obsessed with *Borderlands* at the moment, owning skags and sniping away in Arid Hills as Mordecai. It's so good!





FANTASY MEETS REALITY

As we mentioned Ash is a self-confessed geek girl, so much so that has her hobby tattooed on her curvaceous booty – and that's just the tip of the iceberg. She's only been getting her gaming heroes inked for the last two years now, but at this point she has a varied cast of characters adorning her physique, including a *Final Fantasy VII* sleeve with Tifa, Moogle, a chocobo, Red XIII, Sephiroth, Aeris, Cait and Cloud Strife, to just name a few. If that isn't enough, she also has *Super Mario* mushrooms, Space Invaders, the PlayStation face buttons on her knuckles, an Umbrella Corporation symbol on her back, and to top it all off, Zombie Killer underneath her butt cheeks. Ash, you're awesome and we think we love you.



ASHLEE ADAMS'S TOP 10 VIDEOGAMES



Final Fantasy VII (PSOne)

I don't think any game will ever top that, in terms of development, story, gameplay. The first time I played it I clocked about 240 hours on it, I can close to maxing out every single character. Spent a long time trying to beat the Ruby and Emerald weapons. I think I've pretty much done everything there is to do in *FFVII*.



Resident Evil 2 (PSOne)

It was the first *Resident Evil* I played. I loved it as I have a massive crush on Leon Kennedy, and I like how it came with the two discs and depending on which one you played first, you'd getting a different storyline at the end.



Sid Meier's Civilization (PC)

I've played all the later instalments, but I'm all about the DOS version from 1991. I still have that on my PC and I still go back to it every now and again. It's timeless, fun and I'm completely addicted to it.



Donkey Kong Country 2 (SNES)

It reminds me of being a kid, and me and my brother used to play it, me as Dixie Kong and him as Diddy Kong, and we'd play it for hours and hours when we were young.



Resident Evil 4 (PS2)

Again Leon Kennedy. I realise he's pixels, but I'm in love with him. They really upped the zombies, and rather than just being mindless feeding machines they turned them into people who'd been infected by a parasite, so they still had basic functions, thinking, teaming up, weapons, more skills, so they were harder to evade.



MediEvil (PSOne)

Sir Daniel Fortesque is a legend. I've actually ummed and arred about getting him tattooed on me somewhere. It's just so fun, and the zombies are cool, it's a really lighthearted game to play. Like playing *A Nightmare Before Christmas*.



Final Fantasy VIII (PSOne)

It was the second *Final Fantasy* I played, and I've clocked in a fair amount of time on this one. As much as I really didn't like the characters in that, I really loved the gameplay and the card games.



Tomb Raider 2 (PSOne)

Just simply because Lara Croft kicks arse. I preferred this to the original because it was easier. I love that they brought in the 'save anywhere' thing so it was virtually impossible to die.



Silent Hill (PSOne)

It was so creepy. I loved the nurses, they're one of my favorite videogame villains ever.



Halo 3 (Xbox 360)

Just because I spend so much time online with friends. It's a fun game.

VETERANS



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
ADAM MATHEW

I respect the challenge of Veteran difficulty on *Call of Duty* so much I've got a whole wall dedicated to it. It's not what you're thinking either; I don't have a makeshift shrine that is stuccoed with photographs of me leaning against a TV with a smoking controller in my hand and one foot perched on top of the PS3 (though that would be quite a conversation piece). No, my 'Wall of Duty' is a much more personal homage to one of the most infuriating, unfair difficulty levels ever inflicted upon mankind.

See that indentation that looks like a fist? That was the time two Japanese soldiers spammed me with no less than 12 grenades (each). Do you like that remote control imbedded in the Gyproc next to it? It commemorates the mission in Stalingrad where I faced off against sniping ninja Jesus. Lastly, the absolute pride and joy of my collection, the chair-sized portal into my neighbour's flat; a memento from when the checkpoint system created a groundhog day where life lasted two seconds before my brains got blown out my arse.

So many memories here. Why, if this old place could talk, it would scream obscenities so loud and unholy I would earn myself a death sentence in New Zealand.

Imagine my surprise then, when I attempted Veteran on *Modern Warfare 2* and made it my bitch without a hitch. Admittedly, there was a second there where I was convinced that I was an über gamer – finally, I had evolved into the videogame pwning cyborg off the movie *D.A.R.Y.L.*, or perhaps even the idiot-savant child from *The Wizard*. Man, that was a good five minutes worth of ego self-reach-around.

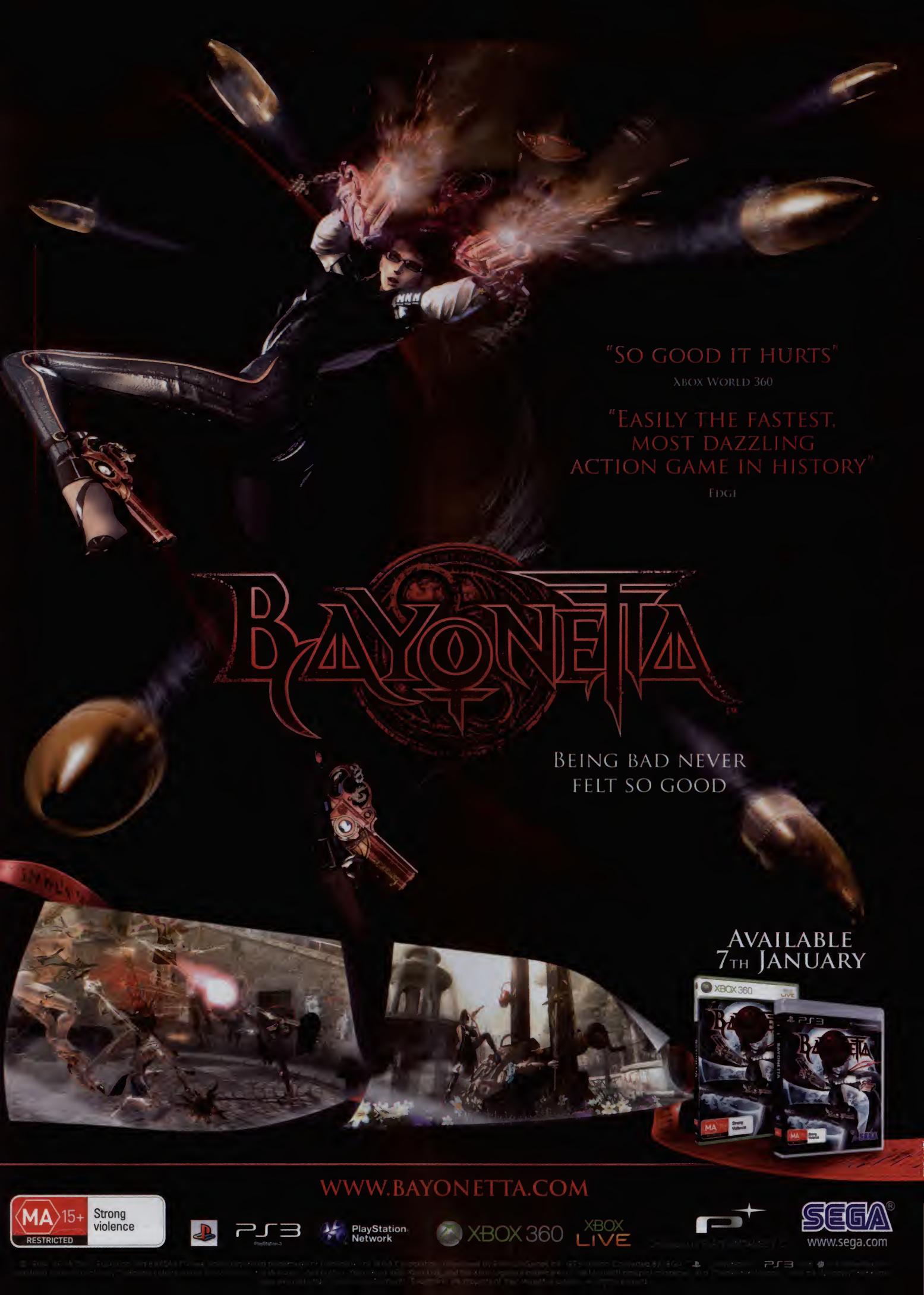
And then I put the original *Modern Warfare* back in for a play...

...and I got my arse handed back to me on a plate (with a side order of grenades). I roared bloody murder at the heavens, and then I kicked the family cat into the opposite neighbour's flat. He's okay folks – as a precaution we always keep Mr Meowgi in a shock-resistant Super Monkey Ball bubble, just in case I ever play *Call of Duty*.

Infinity Ward has purposefully dumbed down the Veteran difficulty in *Modern Warfare 2*; enemies no longer infinitely respawn, their grenades are in shorter supply, and your usual A.I. killbots now have all the bloodlust of a neutered hippy on Yalum. But that I can easily forgive. Less difficulty equals less stress and easier trophies, right?

Wrong. Glancing at my Trophy list, I see that none of the Veteran awards have unlocked. I have to get a system update, and do it all over again. Which is why every single wall in my house is now dedicated to *Call of Duty*.

Adam Mathew has a rage issue that may or may not be eased by the arrival of his offspring.



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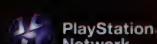
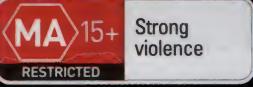
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PAUL TAYLOR



THE STATE OF PLAY

As you read this, *Modern Warfare 2* has been on sale for roughly six weeks. It'd be fair to say that, by this stage, Activision and Infinity Ward are clinking glasses and watching the dollars roll in. It's finally out there, being played and talked about, and by millions of people. There is no doubt that it is a brilliant game, something that is going to be remembered and probably celebrated in top whatever lists for a long time (unless, of course, you played it on PC – but that's another story well documented online.) From single player to Special Ops and finally to multiplayer, it's a game that's flexible and impressive, though if you were going in to it for the story you'd be disappointed by how soon the credits roll.

Saying that, the campaign is the reason for *Modern Warfare 3* to exist – if at all. If you have played and finished it you'll know it ends on a cliffhanger. The story cuts off like it's just taken a big breath in and is yet to exhale, a wrecking ball at the peak of its arc, ready to swing back

down. But, I get the feeling that Infinity Ward's focus is on expanding multiplayer. It's the mode that's going to keep the punters coming back and back, and eventually they're going to want more. Spec Ops, too, would be easily expanded with more self-contained levels. So, if IW can keep this content trickling in, would there even be a *Modern Warfare 3*?

I spoke to a couple of American Activision reps about what I thought would be, the inevitable third part. Their response was

“We’re really not sure what we’re gonna do next”

perfectly non-committal – “It’s an interesting proposition,” said one guy. “That’s quite a theory,” said another, looking at me sideways – but could you really expect anything else? The guys at Infinity Ward had a similar response: “We’re really not sure what we’re gonna do

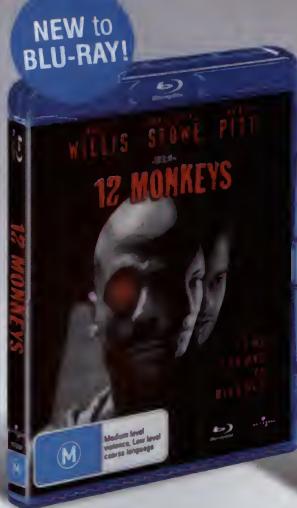
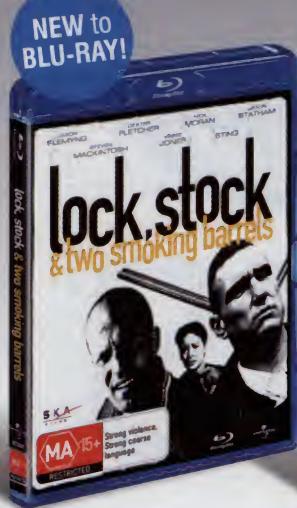
next, if it’ll be *Modern Warfare* at all.” I don’t think, though, that Activision or IW would be so naive to think that *MW2* would be anything but the massive hit – and profit – that it surely has become; of course they’re going to make more! Right? Robert Bowling spoke to MTV.com and said “Once the game gets out we’re going to take a break and play with everybody, and see what they want more of.” If DLC is easily implemented in the code, and IW and the fans are happy with the multiplayer and

Special Ops engine, both of these factors negate the need for another big launch and package.

In this case, don’t expect *Modern Warfare 3* at retail. I think it’ll make its way to your console via the PSN, eventually, for those that really want it (or even as a special package with *MW2* in a couple of year’s time), while the rest plough through the other two modes. That cliffhanger will just have to wait.

Paul Taylor is waiting impatiently, Infinity Ward.

MOVIES LOOK BETTER IN Blu

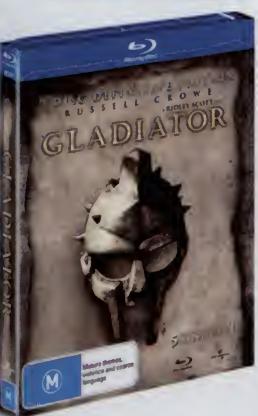
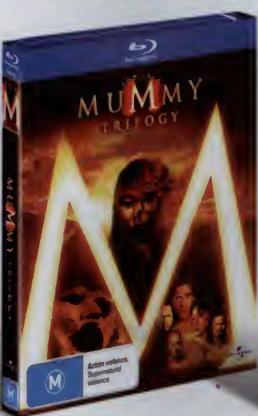
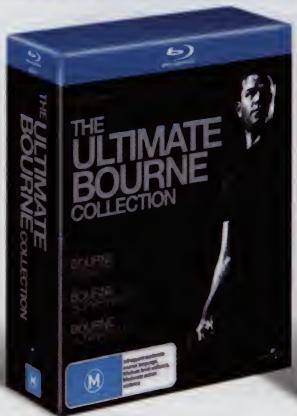


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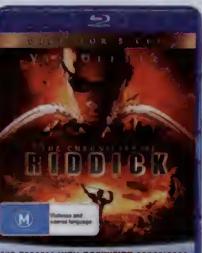
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WRONG-SOUNDING MUPPETS



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
JAMES COTTEE

meaning behind Kojima's obtuse blog posts is almost as much fun as figuring out what the heck his games are all about. Others handle their fame poorly. They get into petty arguments on message boards, or have public meltdowns when their new game bombs. They are only human, but their conduct suggests they have not internalised the fact.

The point is, good games – blockbuster games – are not made by geniuses acting alone. They are made by teams that function well. This is indisputable. It is core groups of programmers, designers, and artists who make our favourite games possible, and despite their anonymity it is they who make the magic happen. It's not the developer, or the label, and it's certainly not the publisher.

Nobody walks into Red Eye Records and ponders: 'I wonder if there's a new album out from Sony Music?' It just doesn't work that way.

There is no substitute for a winning team. Yet many in the corporate world seem incapable of appreciating this. Many, many times we have read of a small, independent developer being acquired by one of the big publishers, only to see its offices moved, its staff re-assigned, its work practices changed, and its brightest stars driven to quit. Perhaps some managers choose to do this because they honestly believe that it's for the greater good, in the same way that you are nourished when food is broken down by the acids in your stomach.

Another possible explanation is that some managers simply enjoy exercising their power. They will break up a team, or install their otherwise unemployable friends in key positions, just because they can.

So, if any games executives are reading, we implore you: be nice to your teams. Downsize, if you must. Close a studio, if you believe it is a burden. But do not try to tell us that it doesn't really matter, just because you still own their old IPs. Remember Jim Henson? He's dead. And the Muppets have been sounding wrong ever since.

In one of his rare media interviews, Rockstar Games overlord and GTA mastermind Dan Houser recently explained why he keeps such a low profile – why he doesn't whore himself out as some kind of all-knowing game design god. It is because he is humble enough to acknowledge that with blockbuster video games, there is no such thing as a one-man-band. Each new *Grand Theft Auto*, *Metal Gear*, or *Final Fantasy* can only be brought to life when dozens, sometimes hundreds of dedicated specialists work together as a close-knit team. The person who leads that team is able to influence a sum of creative output that would be impossible for any one man to achieve in his own lifetime. It is a privileged position. It requires rare skills, but does not give one license to take credit for the genius of one's underlings. Do so, and you only belittle yourself.

Some celebrity game designers handle their status well. We all enjoy the wacky Twitter comments of Cliffy B., and deciphering the

James Cottee knows several types of martial arts you've never even heard of.



PURE MASSACRE

Sometimes I feel hesitant to tell someone they've done something wrong when everything else they've managed up to this point has been without fault.

The team at Infinity Ward has always impressed me. I love their games. They're like mainlining guanana into your eyeballs. They're exciting.

I'd been looking forward to *Modern Warfare 2* since its announcement, and now I've finished it. It's brilliant. But as much as I admire Infinity Ward, it doesn't get a free pass for the way the team completely mishandled 'that scene'.

“But as much as I admire Infinity Ward, it doesn't get a free pass”

The airport massacre: the mission in *MW2* in which one must watch, and has the choice to take part in, a terrorist attack.

If you're still yet to play *MW2*, don't read on. I'm not going to pussyfoot around the spoilers here because for the purposes of this discussion I can't.

'No Russian' is a broken mission. There's no more succinct way I can't put this. Infinity Ward is certainly blazing a trail here, and I won't argue that 'No Russian' is a level like none I have ever seen before. 'No Russian' is provocative in a brand-new fashion. But that's before the spell is shattered.

The usual response to critics of this mission is that the player ultimately has the choice of firing on

the civilians or not. The problem is that's the only choice you have. The mission is so heavily scripted these are the only two choices you have.

When Makarov and his cronies open fire on the screaming crowd, the first thing I did was shoot at Makarov. I was killed instantly by Makarov and told by the game I'd blown my cover. The level restarted. I gave up and followed him and his henchmen through the airport, finger resolutely off the trigger. After the slaughter the police arrived, so I hid behind a barricade assuming Makarov and his men wouldn't need any help from me to take these guys out either.

I followed them most of the way without firing a shot until Makarov told me he had no time for cowards and shot me. The game told me I needed to prove my loyalty to Makarov and sent me back to the nearest checkpoint. Reluctantly I loosed a few grenades towards the cops. I'm certain I killed a couple of them. That seemed to be enough. I followed Makarov a little further, jogging over the remaining corpses to the waiting van. It's here Makarov shot me for the third time – but this is the only occasion Infinity Ward saw fit to let it stick.

This is why 'No Russian' is nonsense. Makarov knows I am a US agent – any talk of blown cover or proving one's loyalty is moot, whether the player knows it yet or not. This mission needed multiple exits. I'm not proposing you should have been able to kill Makarov. Infinity Ward has a story to tell. However, if you fired on Makarov during the massacre he could have shot you and delivered the monologue you would have received at the end of

the level then and there. Similarly, if you refused to shoot the cops, he could've done the same thing.

It's not like Infinity Ward has a problem with you not seeing the mission in full, because it made sure to include the option to let you skip it before it even starts. In fact, you can even skip it from the pause menu while the level is in progress.

You might say you have to make it to the end with bullets expended for the purposes of the story. The Russians can't pin the massacre on the Americans unless you do. But it doesn't matter, because 'No Russian' is conceptually flawed in the first place. Why would Makarov give a loaded gun to a man he knew was a US agent? How could he have guaranteed said agent would not shoot him during the massacre? Did the Russians *really* hinge a full-scale invasion of the United States of America on a single dead US national? Wouldn't an investigation and subsequent forensics have deduced the bullet that killed said US national wasn't fired by any of the police officers? Wouldn't analysis of his weapon show it was barely used? Wouldn't survivors have mentioned the guy who WASN'T shooting? What about the other terrorists that were killed during the post-massacre firefight? Weren't they Russian? Were there no red flags raised here?

This mission must end with you dying for the purposes of the story – it's just illogical that this can't happen when you cause it to happen.

Angry Sackboy is an ex-videogame journalist who does not negotiate with terrorists.

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COMPETITIONS

WIN! WIN! WIN!

WINNING IS HALF THE BATTLE

Our friends at Paramount and Hasbro have given us a massive stack of G.I. Joe gear to give away. Five lucky readers have the chance to win *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* on Blu-ray, a carabiner torch with LED, a Snake Eyes sword & mask package, a Night Raven vehicle, a Snake Eyes & Storm Shadow figure set, an Alpha vehicle with figurine, and a Bravo vehicle with action figure. For a chance to see the postie struggle with this mammoth prize, just answer the question below and follow the entry details on page 29.

Question: In 50 words or less, if you were going to be make a new G.I. Joe, what would he look like and how would he fight evil empires?



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TOTALLY WITCHIN'

Thanks to Sega we have copies of *Bayonetta: Climax Edition* ready to storm eight readers' consoles. This limited edition includes a copy of the game, a replica of Scarborough Fair, the pistol used by Bayonetta in game, a CD soundtrack of in-game music and a 36-page hardcover art book, all wrapped up in premium slipcase packaging. For a chance to win this spellbinding package, answer the following question and follow the entry instructions below.

Question: In 25 words or less, if you were going to slay demons, what special weapon would you strap to your hands and feet and what it be called?

AXE AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

Thanks to Logitech we have a superbly crafted *Guitar Hero* guitar and copy of *Guitar Hero: Metallica* to give away to one lucky reader. For a chance to win this hefty piece of premium gaming gear, simply answer the following question and follow the entry instructions below.

Question: Tell us, in 25 words or less, who do you want in your band and what the name of your supergroup would be.

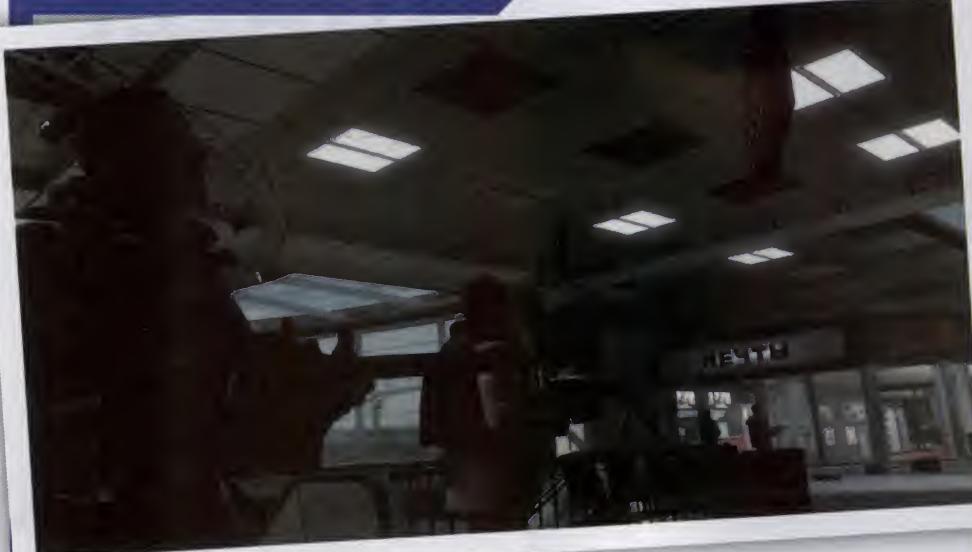


HOW TO ENTER

To enter *Official PlayStation Magazine* competitions email your entries to ops@derwenthoward.com.au with the name of the competition ONLY in the subject line. Email entries are entitled to one entry (multiple entries will be deleted!). Alternatively, send clearly marked postal entries to **OPS** competitions PO BOX 1037, Bondi Junction 1355. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions close 27/01/2010. Winners will be notified by mail.

Speak to us!

LETTER OF THE MONTH!



SEE NO EVIL

Hi guys, great mag. With so many great games being released it's good to have reviews that tell it like it is. Anyway, I'm sure you are receiving many letters about the topic of this one, *Modern Warfare 2* and the much discussed airport level. I must say I was wondering what all the fuss was about. Could it really be as bad as the reports were saying? I was a little surprised to see the option to skip the level appear before the game even started. I chose not to as I wanted to see what had caused all this controversy, as I'm sure all gamers did. First off, though I will say this is a great game, I do wish I had chosen to skip the level. I actually couldn't believe what I was seeing - total shock. I walked through the airport section of the level without firing a single bullet, feeling decidedly uncomfortable. The thought that there were gamers out there who would be enjoying this sort of game interaction, to me, is quite frankly appalling. Gunning down a civilian who is crawling away from you injured is wrong. I heard Infinity Ward defended the decision to include this level as it told a story and immersed

the gamer in that story. I know Infinity Ward choose to immerse the player in the game fully rather than resort to cut scenes which take the player out of the immediate game environment, but come on, seriously, do people need to be that immersed in the game and play that type of level to appreciate the story being told? Surely a cut scene in this instance would have been just as effective in telling the story. I for one felt dirty for playing the level rather than feeling disgust at the terrorists for slaughtering an airport full of people. I believe Infinity Ward stepped over the line with this level and it should not have been allowed in the game. As I said before I'm sure you will receive a multitude of letters on this topic and I'm interested to read the varying opinions, including your own. Cheers. David Fox, via email

It's certainly caused quite a stir, that's for sure. The web is currently full of jam-packed message boards and lengthy essays exploring the controversial mission from every angle. Angry Sackboy, our resident former videogame journalist, also has an opinion on the matter (see page 26) – but it's not shared by everyone here either. Luke wholeheartedly agrees with Sackboy, Paul doesn't. We'd probably disagree the level should have been omitted – but you're entitled to believe it ought to have been. What we think you might agree with is that it may have been improperly realised. Not having the ability to act against the terrorists was a poor decision. It'd need to be programmed to fail, but a failed effort to cut down the killers would have had little effect on the already far-fetched story. It's the first thing we tried.



THE BOOT

Are massive game publishers forgetting about the people who actually play the games? The focus of this long and sorry tale is EA and the Interactive Leagues in *FIFA 09*. I'm sure you are well aware that people all over the world have been desperate for EA to reopen the Interactive Leagues so that they can obtain the platinum Trophy. But for those of you who aren't here is a brief history.

March 19 EA releases a Trophy patch for *FIFA 09*. One of the Trophies, "Real World Winner", requires you to win five Interactive League matches. Two months and two weeks later the Interactive Leagues close down making the Trophy unattainable. Should there be a rule about the Trophies that are required for the platinum or how long trophies are attainable? Many people enjoy the challenge of trying to achieve the platinum Trophy and are now unable to (my thread on this topic on ps3trophies.org created at the start of August has 25000 views).

As annoying as this oversight on the part of *FIFA* is – it is nothing compared to the terrible support you get when you contact them. The replies are inconsistent depending who you speak to, that's if they reply at all. Sometimes they close the support thread without a reply and no explanation. Very, very annoying and not the way you would expect a large company to treat its customers.

I'm not happy with the Trophy situation but I'm more annoyed at the lack of customer service. They simply don't care. Regardless of what happens with *FIFA 09* they know they will sell loads of copies of *FIFA 10* so they are unhelpful.

I am thinking of raising this issue with ACCC and the Office of Fair Trading as the advertised features were not available in the game when I purchased it.

Paul Coe, via email

*We can see why you're annoyed, but at some point EA was going to stop supporting the old game to make room for the new one. It's mentioned in the manual. It'll happen again next year for when *FIFA 11* arrives.*



LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS...

DARKSIDERS

The letter of the month this issue will receive a copy of *DarkSiders* for their troubles – enjoy!

HARD GORE

I understand the appeal of running round shooting virtual soldiers heads off but don't you think the games of late have gone a bit too over the top with violence lately? Just look at *Fallout 3*, it is possible to dislodge people's limbs off with a single punch, THAT NOT EVEN POSSIBLE UNDER PRETTY



MUCH ANY CIRCUMSTANCE! What's even worse is how am I supposed to believe *MGS4* or *Crysis* contains the degree of violence depicted in *MW2* or *Ninja Gaiden 2*? Shooting someone and seeing a small spray of blood drop on to the ground does not at all come near seeing a mutant cow's head explode due to a

bullet from a BB gun or seeing a ninja being slashed in half by a massive sword leaving a trail of gore along the ground, yet both are labelled the same and both can be purchased by a 15-year-old.

Leonidas Smith, via email

Yep, almost everyone agrees we need to have the system updated.

BREAKDOWN

First of all let me say, I love your work, and please don't take this personally. As I am a rational human being (and I believe an evenly tempered and thoughtful man) I would like to say that the makers of *Gran Turismo 5* have let us down. I would like to say that they could have explained to us why all the delays on a game that, in its purest form, is as old as computers itself. Maybe you guys are having massive problems, you could tell us, we would understand. Maybe you want to wait until the PS4 comes out. Okay, we wouldn't like it but we would understand. Maybe you guys are having the biggest tournament in office history and want to make sure the day it launches you guys have all the Trophies. We have all been in that kind of office before and we

would understand.

But you haven't told us anything.

I would like to say all these things and explain to CEOs about profit margins, responsibilities to shareholders, and the importance of this current fiscal year in relation to your outgoing expenditures.

Well I might have said that two years ago, when you kept delaying release dates and it was ridiculous.

So now I will say this, I want you to go to the factory in Q1 of 2010 (giggles... as if), get one of the *GT5* games (region 4 please) and stick it in your rising sun.

That's right, I don't want it, like the super hot girl in high school that shot you down in flames and then kept leading you on, I don't want it. You had your chance two years



We're fools for tools (of speed)

THE OPS FACEBOOK PAGE NEEDS YOU!

CAPTION THIS!

WE ASKED FOR THE FUNNIES, YOU DELIVERED. MATT LEES, TAKE A BOW!

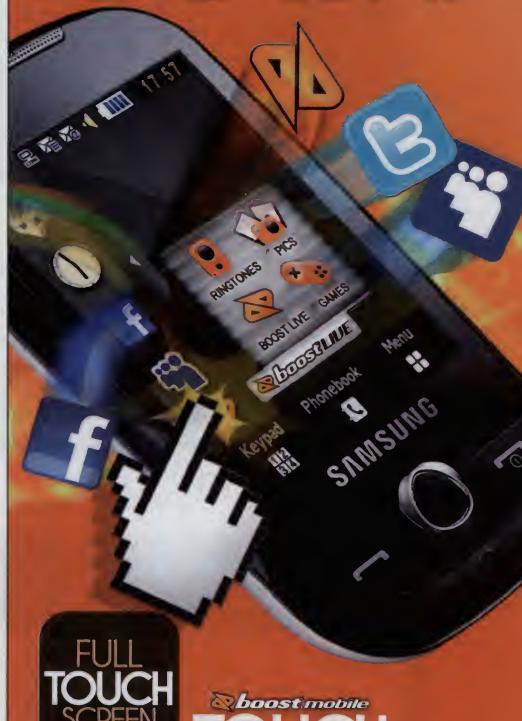
As pretty as his garden was, Suzy still felt uncomfortable when left alone there with Uncle Mike.



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CUTTINGS FOURSOME

SIZE MATTERS

I notice you decreased the width of the magazine.

James, Canberra

Actually, we just popped over to your place and decreased the length of all your rulers.

WHIZ KID

Great issue but a little thing stuck with me and couldn't let it go. In the Uncharted review Luke says that Uncharted utilised 30% of the PlayStation 3's power. And then later says that Uncharted 2 looks 70% better. Does that mean that Uncharted 2 only utilises 51% of the PS3? Apart from that it was a top notch read.

Descensus, via forum

Er, clearly maths isn't our strong point. We get paid to write, not do sums.

Hey OPS, you guys are great. I've read other PlayStation mags and they just don't measure up. Anyway, I'm writing to bring an issue to your attention that has been annoying me for some time now. Four-player multiplayer splitscreen for shooters is what I'm talking about, there is a shortage of them and I'm sick of it. Sure, there are plenty of multiplayer games out there but almost all of them require online play and even then its online play against people halfway around the world. Seriously sometimes I just want to have a few mates over and slaughter them in a bloody shootout, but the only decent games for that kind of thing are the *Call of Duty* series. Don't get me wrong, I love *Call of Duty* but sometimes I just want a little variety. No matter how good the game is you're bound to get sick of it eventually. *Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising* for example is four-player online but no splitscreen.



Other example is the zombie mode in *Call of Duty: World at War*, okay, it's splitscreen but only for two people and if you try to go four player online you can only play by yourself with a bunch of people in China or something. I get that online play is the way of the future but why dump the faithful splitscreen, why?

Sam Bussing, via email

It's because the fun police came along, in their \$3000 suits, and declared four people buying a copy of a game and playing it on four separate consoles is more profitable than letting them have the same amount of fun with just one copy. Honestly, you don't really need any more than *Modern Warfare 2*, but *Warhawk* is a good four-player splitscreen shooter – try that.

THE PlayStation. Official Magazine - Australia CROSSWORD!

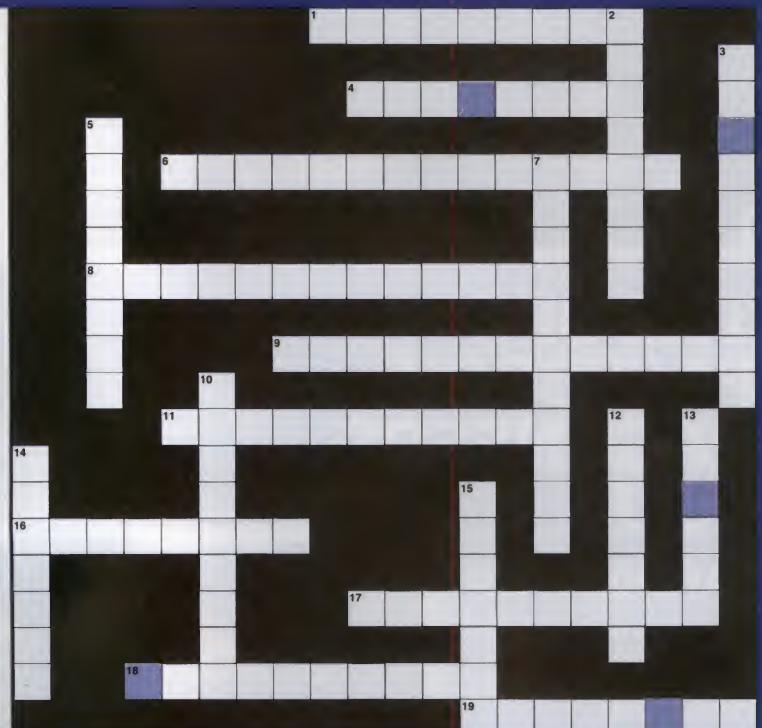
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Across

- Evil Dead game, A Fistful of ____ (9)
- PS2 brawler, ____ Fists of Vengeance (4,4)
- Hit this creature's weak point for massive damage (5,5,4)
- We EARNED RAW FORM in this shooter (6,7)
- Ancient PSOne snow board game (4,8)
- MotorStorm sequel (7,4)
- Sega RPG, ____ Chronicles (8)
- World's first MOGIE starring the Clayton brothers (5,5)
- Mike "Downtown" Hudson starred in this game (10)
- Doesn't want an R18+ rating for games, Michael (8)

Down

- What type of animal is Tekken's Roger? (8)
- Japan knows it as Siren: New Translation, but we call it Siren (5,5)
- Composer of the score for Final Fantasy XII, Hitoshi ____ (8)
- Development team who made DiRT and GRID (11)
- The lead designer on Darksiders, Joe ____ (9)
- Stranglehold was directed by ____ (4,3)
- One of the games the Clayton brothers used in their MOGIE, Blazing ____ (6)
- First was Point Of Impact, then Takedown, then ____ (7)
- Also the owner of a box, Borderlands is set here (7)



LAST month's answers: Acros 2. DINOSPHERE, 5. GAMERSICROVODON, 7. PIXELUNK, 10. VATTA, 11. SKAGS, 14. STUBBLE, 17. BLOODBOWL, 18. COUNTERTOP, 20. THIRDPERSON, 21. KILLER, 22. COOKINGMAMA, 24. ZONE, 3. PRONE, 4. BABIES, 6. FISTFULCAKE, 8. JAPAN, 9. FAULT, 12. SYNDROME, 13. DEMODICK, 14. SCOTTPILGRIM, 15. BAYONETTA, 16. MULTI, 17. KIRIN, 18. BLOODY, 19. KRIE, 20. BLOODY, 21. KRIE, 22. COOKINGMAMA Down 1. ZONE, 2. DINOSPHERE, 3. PRONE, 4. BABIES, 5. GAMERSICROVODON, 6. FISTFULCAKE, 7. PIXELUNK, 8. JAPAN, 9. FAULT, 10. VATTA, 11. SKAGS, 12. SYNDROME, 13. DEMODICK, 14. SCOTTPILGRIM, 15. BAYONETTA, 16. MULTI, 17. KIRIN, 18. BLOODY, 19. KRIE, 20. BLOODY, 21. KRIE, 22. COOKINGMAMA

THE OPS QUIZ THING

Our imaginatively titled quiz will sort out the wheat from the chaff. Prove your worth with these brainbusters!

LIKE A BAWSS SPECIAL

1. Who am I?

I'm a boss who had exceptional sniping skills. I was born in the early 1860s, have a pet parrot, and you can "kill me" by sissying out and not playing the game for seven days.



2. Successfully name the first three bosses you face in the original *Crash Bandicoot* on PSone

3. Can you name these water-based bosses and the games they come from?



4. To fell a boss you'll need some equipment, can you name these tools of the trade?

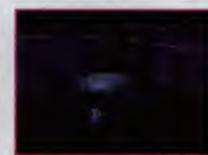


11. WHICH GAMES ARE THESE BOSS FIGHT SCENES FROM

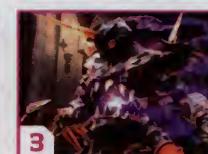


5. I am a boss from a Konami PSX game (re-released on PSN) whose name is spelled the exact reverse of the game's hero. Who am I?

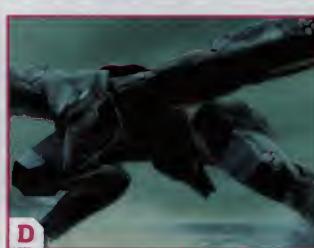
6. What do these three bosses have in common?



7. From who (or what) do these bosses take orders from?

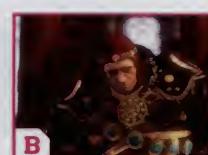


8. Name the game from these boss images



9. In *Killzone 2*, who do you have to take down in the palace in order to get to Scolar Visari?

10. Match the three bosses with their intended victims



ANSWERS 1. The End 2. Puppet Pappa, Ripper Roo, Kaila Kong 3. Del Lago - Resident Evil 4, The Hydras - God of War, Tidal Wave - Transformers: Armada 4. Stinger Missile, Pandoras Box, Keyblade 5. Dracula 6. We're all bosses who can fly 7. Liquid Snake's hand! The Greeter Friends, Soul Edge 8. Devil May Cry 3, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Lost Planet, Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty 9. Colonel Metal Badge 10. A - 2, C - 3, B - 1 11. Silent Hill Homecoming, Resident Evil 5, Resident Evil 4, Gitar Hero III, X-Men Origins

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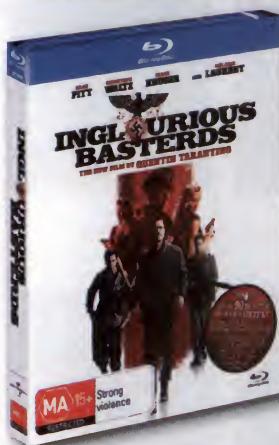
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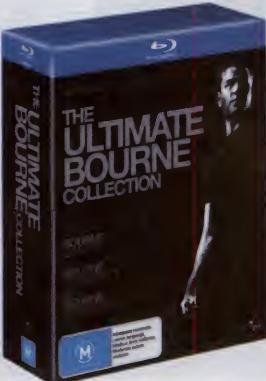
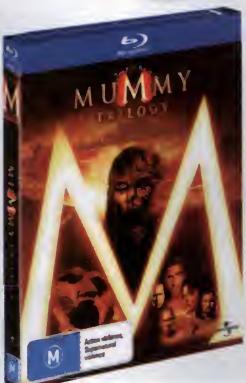
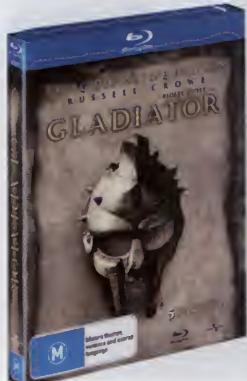
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So, who wants more
modern warfare?

PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: MID 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR | DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

RED DEAD REDEMPTION

We just can't quit you....

IT'S LIKE...



"Awww, but I wanna be a cowboy!" Who among you gathered here today hasn't whined that phrase at least once during your childhood? Hell, we can remember saying that crap like it was yesterday. That's because it was yesterday – we said it in protest when the wife bought us a pirate-looking, puffy shirt.

The point is; ever since we were kids, right up until yesterday (when Jerry Seinfeld's worst nightmare became our reality), we've always wanted to experience what it's like to be a gunslinger. Well, thanks to a greatly-improved

GTA V engine, Rockstar Sydney granted us the opportunity to do just that – and here's what we got up to in the wild, wild west.

Our demo opens with our anti-hero, John Marston, kicking dirt over his fire (these campsites serve as the saving hubs of the game, you see). Wasting no time, we saddle up, pick up a trail and set out towards what could be a town shimmering in the distance. Before we're halfway up the next foothill we stumble across four banditos robbing a wagon. The detail of the animations and realism of the scene is quite striking; two



40 SKATE 3
The most addictive skating series around returns for take three!



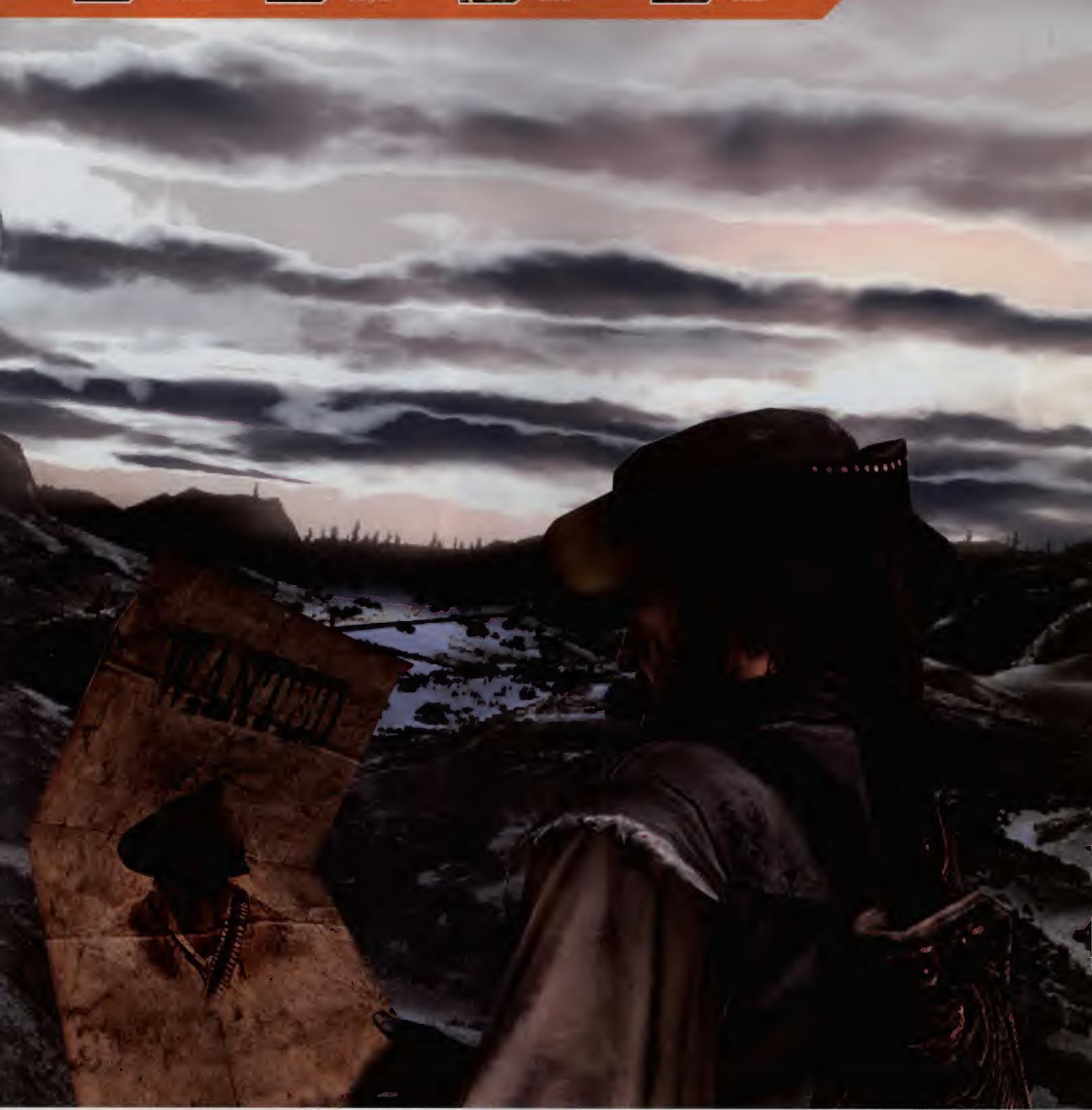
42 ARMY OF TWO:
THE 40TH DAY
High-fives in Shanghai!



43 ENSLAVED
A brand new adventure from the makers of *Medieval: Total War*!



43 INVERSION
Turning the world upside-down in this twisted new shooter!



desperados are struggling to carry a money box from the wagon, one has the hapless owner at gunpoint, the last S.O.B. is keeping a very wary eye on us from his horse (which, amazingly, has sensed the tension from its rider and is just as jittery).

Personally, we only do our killin' after our whiskey breakfast, folks – so we decide to casually clip-clop past without incident. However, closer towards the town we meet another fella in distress who bursts out of the scrub and bolts toward us screaming for help. Feeling bad for our previous inaction we woo-

up and allow him to approach. Whimpering thanks, he reaches our leg, grand-theft-horsies us out of the saddle, and rides away whoopin' and a-hollerin'. We get to our feet, casually dust ourselves off, wait until he is a good 20 metres away... and then we whistle to the horse. The faithful steed pitches the bandit off in a hilarious gaggle of unscripted, euphoria-driven limbs and bolts right back to us. We remount and let the thief limp off into the desert. Via con dios, peckerwood.

Cantering into the town, we hitch up the horse, and mosey down the dusty main

street at a walking pace – which, we may add, will be your speed of choice in *Red Dead Redemption* (getting from point A to point B very slowly has NEVER been this entertaining, or looked so goddamned cool). The 'town' doesn't strike us as being very cosmopolitan but the AI citizenry are, once again, doing very complex, very believable things. Blacksmiths are sharpening knives and mending horse shoes, there's a questionable butcher hacking up a chicken with a cleaver, and lewd women are hanging over railings trying to entice us in for a drink (at the very least). →

INCOMING

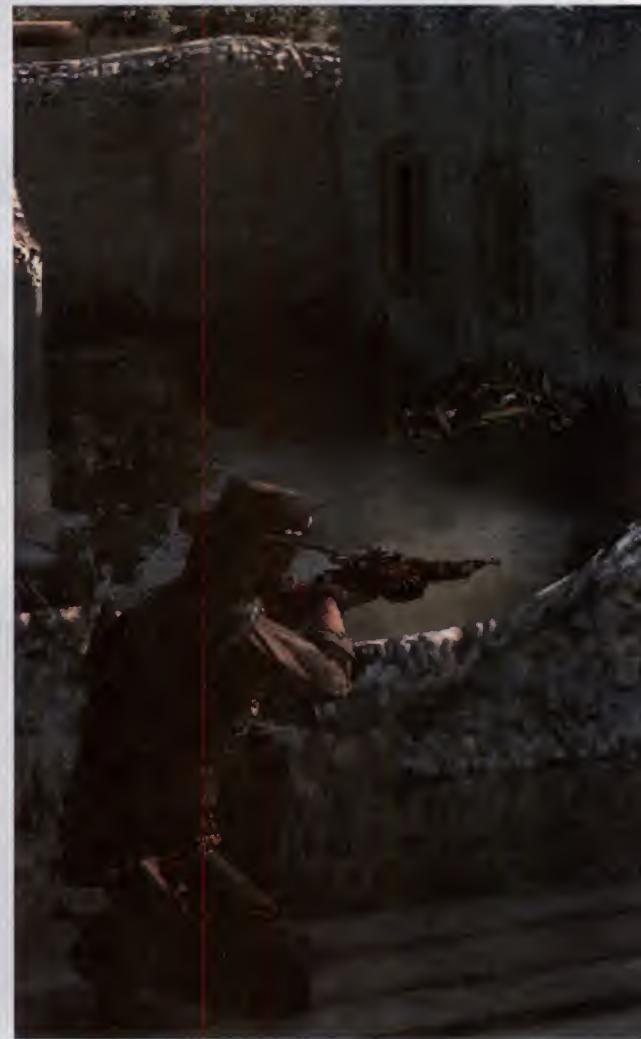
Red Dead Redemption



"Reach!" "Is this a holdup?" "It's a science experiment!"



"Easy there Rooting King, woah boy..."



Head = canoe



Making a mental bookmark for later, we instead decide to amble over to the Sheriff's office – possibly to get some bounty hunting work, maybe to shoot him down (but not his deputy). We haven't really decided yet. As we approach the lawdog hammers up a wanted poster, our interest piques, we take a quick gander, and then rip the poster off to accept the job.

Heading back out into the desert we're struck once again by the absolutely jaw-dropping visuals, it's got that whole 'beautiful in an ugly way' thing going on – not unlike the desolate Capital wastelands of *Fallout 3*. But, unlike Bethesda's offering, *Redemption* sports a truly magnificent HDR lighting system, and some of the purtiest sunsets ever. We waste a good five minutes watching as God gets out his crayons and then, eventually, as he breaks out the glitter. Waiting for night time also serves us a practical purpose; our outlaw target has lit a small campfire in the valley below us, and it may as well be a neon sign that says 'come and make my head into a canoe'. Happy to oblige, we slip down off the horse, equip a scoped rifle, and scamper in low and quiet-like through the shrubbery.

Two ugly banditos lay talking near the fire, two more are standing up listening to the sound of some coyotes howling (we don't know it at this point, but they have gotten our scent, and they're hungry). Two ear-splitting bangs reverberate through the valley as we sink slugs into the two alerted thugs. We shoulder the rifle, grip our pistol heel, and sprint in for the final two – our mark is worth more without an extra breathin' hole, apparently. The final guard has his gun out and is firing wildly in every direction but ours. We casually step into the firelight and trigger Dead Aim; a kick-ass gunslinger mechanic from the previous game, *Red Dead Revolver*. Time slows to a molasses crawl, the world gets painted orange, and we paint six targets

“...our mark is worth more **without an extra breathin' hole**”

on our victim (one on his left kneecap, two in his crotch, one near his ticker and a double-tap to the forehead). Time resumes, we skin our smoke wagon and fan-fire the frack out of him.

He ragdolls backwards into the campfire, we whistle for our ride, re-saddle quicker than most circus performers, and gallop after our fleeing mark. We close the gap to 10 metres, hurl out a well aimed lasso that catches him around the neck and bring him down. Hard. According to our Rockstar rep we now have the option of dragging this sumbitch back to the law behind our horse – but we figure if we sand his face off he might be hard to identify. One quick hog tie later, and we throw him over the back of the horse instead.



TREASURE HUNT, Y'ALL!

There's gold in them thar hills, buckaroo. During our trapse through Mexico, we stumbled across a shifty-looking sort who sold us a map that led to buried treasure – or were the directions to some guy's house, we forget which. With only the rough drawing of a rocky landmark to go by, we eventually noticed a match on the horizon, located as suspicious gathering of rocks at the site, and uncovered a lovely gold bar. Much like the bounty hunting missions, *Redemption* is peppered with tonnes of these easter egg hunts. Except the prize you find doesn't translate into chocolate and a childish sense of accomplishment – more like whiskey, bigger guns to put bigger holes in folks, and a free tour of the local red lantern district.

Why don't people wear hats anymore?

It's seemingly minor choices like these in *Red Dead Redemption* that can affect your honour and fame levels. Play the hero and you'll get cheaper discounts in towns, the flipside being; you may miss out on some easier paying, morally-reprehensible gigs. If you do decide to go rogue, the federales will posse-up and come gunning for you – and escaping their line of sight (a'la *GTA IV*), won't completely solve your troubles. Repeated shenanigans sear the words 'WANTED' into the top right-hand corner of the screen with an ever increasing dollar amount. After murdering a gang of townsfolk, our Rockstar rep decided to mention that we could have bought a bandana to cover our face to avoid identification. Information, yesterday...

There you have it, pardners, that's a typical day in the life of a cowboy. Before we leave the Rockstar premises we voice a concern to the rep; that last mission was a barrel of laughs, but what about the bits when we're in-between missions? With so many open spaces, won't *Redemption* get boring? He smiles and tells us that the rootin' tootin' fun we just had was not part of any scripted mission. Our jaw drops. The AI on AI



Pictured: duded-up, egg-sucking guttertrash

robbery at the start, and the horse thief, were all completely random events, as was the location of the outlaw.

We just had an absolute blast and it was only a side diversion – four-fifths of bugger all of the campaign. The world may look sparse, but it's rich with dynamic detail and events. Dumbstruck, we consider the possibilities and glance back over at the TV. Our cowboy has set up a 'save campsite' and is pitching a tent. We pitch one of our own...  Adam Mathew

WE SAY

- ↑ Shooting action outdoes *GTA IV*
- ↑ Coolness out the wazoo
- ↓ No 'AI Swearengen' button

OPS IS...
Loading for bear





PS3 | GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: DICE

For all the uninitiated out there, *Bad Company* is a first-person shooter. It is NOT a work-sim that recreates your last place of employment – with the big-wigs who under-pay you, and the bitchy water-cooler obsessed co-workers who make you wanna go out and buy that Armalite AR-10 carbine gas-powered semi-automatic

weapon. Uh... y'know what? These are our issues. We'll work through them.

Featuring a true destruction model this time around – thanks to the bar being reset by *Red Faction: Guerrilla* – *Bad Company 2* certainly is looking bad (like, Michael Jackson circa 1985 what's-bad-is-good bad). Fire off a rocket and you'll completely destroy a building rather than just its walls and, should you happen to cut a similar sized hole in a person, the game will now reward your efforts with some blood (which wasn't the case in the first game). Will DICE be giving flesh destruction the same high priority as building demolition? Unfortunately, we can only speculate (and hope) at this point.

Multiplayer-wise there will be new vehicles such as the UH-60 Black Hawk, a kick-ass quad bike, a two-man patrol boat and a tank with an AA-gun (according to our field manual here, that stands for 'Anti-Aircraft'). *BC2* will also continue to use the addictive 'dog tag' collection mechanic (if you melee your enemies you can steal their dog tags for bragging rights). Bring this on.

– Adam Mathew

BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

Explosions make for wonderful company...

PS3 | GENRE: SPORTS | RELEASE: MAY 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: BLACK BOX

SKATE 3

There's no 'I' in team

Team up. Throw down. That's *Skate 3*'s new credo. It's not just a clever catchphrase conjured up over a Thursday lunch meeting though – it's the crux of the entire game.

Skate 3 is entirely team-based whether you're playing on- or offline. When you're playing alone the game will hook you up with a few AI mates so you can compete against opposing teams. You can play the game co-op though, and we anticipate this will be the best way to do it. It's a persistent set-up, so you'll be able to play alone or with human partners in the same career and progress normally regardless.

Rather than reinvent San Vanelona, the Black Box crew has crafted a brand new city called Port Carverton. The news is Port Car (as we're certain it'll be dubbed) will be more of a skater's paradise than San Van ever was.

If you feel the city isn't cutting it though you'll be able to make your own skatepark – just like back in *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*. *Skate 2* may have had a spot creator, but *Skate 3* will feature a ground-up park editor that will allow you to construct a facility from scratch. It seems quite flexible, which is cool.

Skate 3 is due in May 2010. – Luke Reilly

WE SAY

- ↑ Destructaholics unite
- ↑ Awesome 5.1 soundscape
- ↓ Single-player news please!

OPS IS...

Hanging around the water-cooler



WE SAY

- ↑ Ditches the security guards
- ↑ New city
- ↓ Too soon?

OPS IS...

Busting a nut



CHRISTMAS IS UNDER CONTROL!



Unique and hilarious comedies, sci-fi thrillers and a modern classic about British gangsters – Universal Pictures has Blu-ray covered this festive season!

With the release of some of the most memorable movie titles to stunning high-definition Blu-ray format for the first time, and all under \$30, you won't be left scrambling for gift ideas with something to suit even the fussiest of gift recipients!

A few of the most essential Blu-ray titles to look out for this Christmas include:



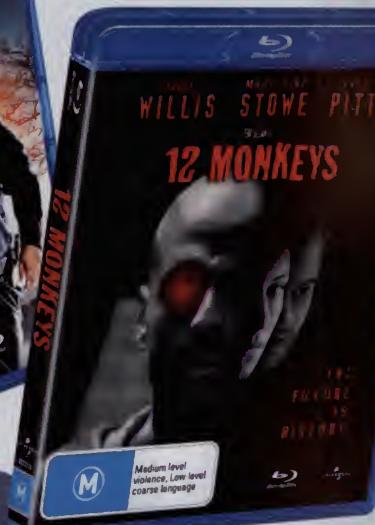
HOT FUZZ

When top London cop, PC Nicholas Angel (Simon Pegg), is reassigned to the quiet town of Sandford, he struggles with his seemingly crime-free world... and oafish partner Danny (Nick Frost).

When several grisly accidents rock the village, it's not long before Danny's dreams of explosive, car chasing, gun fighting, all-out action become reality! It's time for these small-town cops to hand out big-city justice!

Bonus Features:

- Inadmissible: Deleted Scenes
- Outtakes
- The Evidence Room
- Conclusive: We Make Hot Fuzz
- Speculative Video Blogs
- Forensic Featurettes
- Hearsay: Plot Holes & Comparisons
- Special Effects: Before & After
- Falsified: Dead Right
- *Dead Right* (1993): Edgar Wright's First Cop Movie
- The Fuzzball Rally – Uncut
- And Much More...



12 MONKEYS

The year is 2035 and human kind subsists in a desolate netherworld following the eradication of 99% of the Earth's population, a holocaust that makes the planet's surface uninhabitable and mankind's destiny uncertain. Cole (Bruce Willis), a reluctant volunteer aided by Kathryn Railly (Madeline Stowe), have only two clues to solve the puzzle of the 12 Monkeys which threatens to completely erase humanity from the planet.

Bonus Features:

- The Hamster Factor & Other Tales of 12 Monkeys (Making Of)
- Theatrical Trailer
- Feature Commentary with Director Terry Gilliam & Producer Charles Roven
- *12 Monkeys* Archives

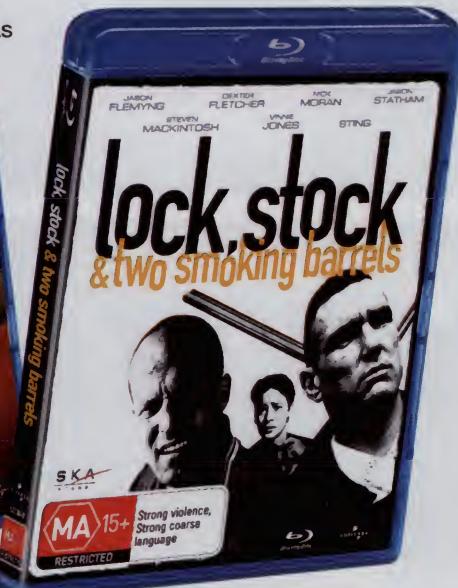


SHAUN OF THE DEAD

Life is going nowhere for Shaun. He spends his life in his local pub, The Winchester, with his best mate Ed, has issues with his Mum and neglects his girlfriend Liz. When Liz dumps him, Shaun finally decides to get his life in order. Unfortunately, the dead are returning to life and attempting to eat the living. For the newly inspired Shaun, this is just another obstacle. In the face of a full scale zombie invasion, armed with a cricket bat and spade, Shaun sets out with Ed in tow, to rescue his mum and (grudgingly) his step-dad, his girlfriend and (even more grudgingly) her friends David and Dianne and take them to the safest most secure place he knows, The Winchester.

Blu-ray Exclusives:

- Zombie-O-Meter Trivia Pack
- Picture in Picture
- Storyboards
- Bonus Features:**
- TV Bits
- Zombie Gallery
- Missing Bits – deleted scenes and outtakes
- Trails of the Dead
- Audio Commentaries
- Raw Meat – including Simon Pegg's video diary and other featurettes
- Storyboard Gallery



LOCK, STOCK & TWO SMOKING BARRELS

Often imitated, never equalled, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* is a high-octane East End gangster comedy thriller. Journey into London's seedy underworld with brilliant street-wise dialogue and razor sharp black comedy. Guy Ritchie at his best!

Bonus Features:

- Lock, Stock and Two F--king Barrels – featurette
- One Smoking Camera – featurette.

All Blu-ray titles are available for \$29.95 RRP from all good entertainment retailers!



"It takes two, bro – just me and you"



"Bro, you're not scowling enough"



PS3 GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: JANUARY 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: EA MONTREAL

ARMY OF TWO: THE 40TH DAY

Two heads are better than one



Bromance?



IT'S LIKE...



Nathan Drake



Big Foam Hand

Salem and Rios' last adventure was fairly lacklustre, though it had heart. It tried to make this generation's oft coveted feature, co-op, into a full game: without your partner you couldn't succeed. Sometimes it worked, but overall it felt clumsy due to the mechanics behind it and the relationship between the two fist-bumping, wise-talking heroes – in short, they were mercenary meatheads who celebrated victory in a set piece by playing air guitar.

The sequel sets to fix that what was broken and polish what was dull, whilst adding new elements. Shanghai is the explosive playground for the duo and it's a glorious environment to be in. Graphics are highly saturated, while the

streets and buildings look busy; think colour, life and general clutter, which you'd expect in China's largest city. From the stills it's bordering on an *Uncharted 2* level of detail, if Nathan Drake decided to stack on 30 kilos and get a job blocker on his right arm.

Salem and Rios also take off their masks when talking to each other, so hopefully this will make them more accessible to players who couldn't get to grips with protagonists whose faces were only visible during cut scenes. Their attitude of 'kill 'em all' is also toned down, as hostages play a role in the scenario. Come across a room of terrorists and one guy can pretend to surrender while the other sneaks around the back and takes out bad dudes, saving lives. Or, if you'd just prefer to take your chances head-on with the possibility of collateral damage, so be it.

Along with these blood-lust scenarios, there are also 'morality moments'. These are self-contained events where you're given an A or B choice. Do you kill the guard that has busted you stealing weapons from a cache so you can tool up, or do you put them back? Either choice has consequences that play out in illustrated panels, separately to the game, and we don't doubt the repercussions will be tied in

to Trophies and future progress. At least, we're assuming they will be, otherwise the point of them will likely escape us.

Your teammate isn't just there to give you a boost up to a higher ledge, or for ballsy chitchat. You'll now be able to send one guy ahead to scope out a room and 'tag' the enemy's location on the radar, allowing the merc to get a line of sight he would otherwise not have had.

Army of Two: The 40th Day looks to boost the importance of working together to achieve a common goal throughout the whole game, rather than in single instances. We just hope its pulled off right to give 2010 a smart start.

Verdict soon. Paul Taylor

WE SAY

- ↑ Stunning environments
- ↑ Morality moments
- ↑ Co-op: everyone loves it

OPS IS...
Best pals forever



PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: 2010 TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI | DEVELOPER: NINJA THEORY

ENSLAVED

Action with a dash of Monkey magic

Any "I was King Kong and Gollum" Serkis is the Nolan "I'm Drake, Prince of Persia and everyone other male character" North of motion capture. Serkis once again straps on the blue dots and wizardry of mo-cap to provide the body language and movement of Monkey, a muscular and gruff character capable of smashing droids in to scrap, who partners with Trip, a Nariko look-alike who is both Monkey's captor and ticket for survival in a post-apocalyptic New York City set 150 years in the future.

Yes, another destroyed world scenario. But it promises to be different, a scenario that

utilises two different characters that are thrust together, depending on one another even though they may not like it. Monkey is the brawn, the tool for clearing the path of killing machines bent on destroying or capturing human resistance, and Trip is the brains, able to scout the area ahead to map the best way to ensure survival.

The world they're in is in a state of glorious destruction. Nature is taking back the landscape amongst the ruined buildings and the killing machines themselves are intricate creations whose cogs and gears are visible and Monkey isn't afraid to take them apart like

Kratos would. Despite the emphasis on brute force, we anticipate a fine balance of tactics and action. **Paul Taylor**

WE SAY

- ↑ Lush graphics
- ↑ Monkey is badarse
- ↓ Another apocalyptic world



OPS IS...

Going bananas

PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: 2010 TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI | DEVELOPER: SABER INTERACTIVE

INVERSION

Upside down, round and round, inside out...

The plot is pure B-grade action fare – a cop and his neighbour fight aliens to save the cop's missing kid – but it matters not when the focus is on gravity-twisting weaponry that could (dare it be said) turn action on its head.

Once you have the gravity gun... err, 'Grappler' in your grasp, you'll be able to flip objects in combat, thus exposing enemy locations and destroying cover. It's not all just shoot-kid-destroy though, as there are environmental puzzles to solve, sometimes

involving turning the whole world upside down. It's all powered by the totally capable, and award-winning Havok physics engine, so you know that lobbing cars, barriers and dudes is going to feel convincing.

Despite the credentials, we're divided on this. It sounds a touch like a 3rd person version of *Half-Life 2*, but just with 'cop' instead of 'scientist', 'neighbour' in place of 'ace hacker lady', and 'cop's missing kid' rather than 'world' – and it comes quite a few years after the mad gravity trend that permeated videogames in the mid-noughties.

Yes, gravity is now a tool and a weapon, like bullets and time, and this has the potential to be cool, as we're promised zero gravity environments. We're also yet to see its cover system in action or the scope of the weaponry and tools at your disposal. Here's hoping that the emphasis on gravity doesn't wind up being a gimmick, or a real lead-in.

Paul Taylor

WE SAY

- ↑ Intricate environments
- ↑ Experimenting with gravity
- ↓ Lame plot



OPS IS...

Defying Newton

TALKIN' WITH THE TEKKEN MAN

Words: Anthony O'Connor

We sit down with Katsuhiro Harada, the big man behind 10 years of *Tekken*, and talk all things Iron Fist

Tekken 6 is warming the disc drive of many a PS3 around the world. Right now there are people kicking arse with the rotund-but-spry Bob, pounding heads with Jack-6 and swearing at the freaking kangaroo – Roger Jr.

Sorry, but that bloody marsupial should really be retired. In a large pit of spikes, which is subsequently filled with concrete and the earth salted.

But we digress.

Tekken 6 is, for a lot of gamers, the best *Tekken* yet. It's certainly the most beautiful. The character models are quite amazing, the moves you can execute are spectacular and the backgrounds are often not just cool and dynamic, they can actually help or hinder your gameplay – allowing characters to bust through the floor on some levels or smack each other into walls.

OPS was lucky enough to interview *Tekken* mainstay, producer and director of *Soulcalibur* IV and, of course, *Tekken* 6 – Namco's Katsuhiro Harada.

This charming gent chatted at length, with the aid of an interpreter, about the kicky/punchy goodness that is *Tekken* 6. Here's what he had to say.

OPS: It's unusual to have all the characters unlocked at the start of a fighting game. Why did you make that choice, to have all 42 characters available from the get-go?

KH: Yes, if you're playing arcade mode, VS. mode or Team Battle you can use all of the characters. This was so people can just pick up the game and start playing. However more serious players will find unlocks are required for the campaign scenario. This decision was made because of feedback from the fans. They don't want to have to wait to try out the exciting new characters or old favourites.

OPS: The graphics are nothing short of stunning in this entry. How did you manage to accomplish this and yet still have relatively short load times – at least, after you've installed the game?

At this point Harada talked at great length with the interpreter, and came back with this rather surprising, and refreshingly honest answer.

KH: I am actually a bit disappointed with the graphics in *Tekken* 6 and would like to apologise to the fans. If you say the graphics are good I am happy, but to my eye I can see where they don't look as good.

OPS: Well, we love the graphics anyway, but we certainly understand that sometimes you can get too close to something. Of course, you need more than graphics to make a great game. It's been interesting with *Tekken* 6 because the characters are really well balanced. With such a massive array of characters how did you manage that?

KH: I have been working on the *Tekken* series for over 10 years and it's quite a challenge. On one hand we want each character to be unique both in looks and fighting style, but we tried to make it so no one individual can dominate. For that we simplified some of the moves from previous games, added some for other characters. It took a long time to get right.

ROO-TED

It was only after we'd returned to OPS Towers that we realised "fan expectation" can't explain Roger Jr. After all, someone had to have put him in the game in the first place! Damn it Roger/Roger Jr. – you've got us again!



OPS: Okay, seriously, why Roger Jr.? We have a pink-haired robot girl who can hand her head to her foe and it explodes. We have Kuma/Panda and Jack-6 who makes Arnie look like a skinny Emo – do we really still need the roo? Aren't things bizarre enough?

KH: I try to be aware of fan expectation and live up to their hopes and desires. The characters in Tekken 6 are what the Tekken community have wanted for some time.

OPS: There's a fluidity to the animation in Tekken 6 that's not been seen before. How did you manage to get such solid character models in such amazing backgrounds to move with such agility?

KH: There's a process we used called full-time animation variable blur. It smoothes the edges of movement and allows us to make the characters look graceful as they battle.

OPS: So you do acknowledge that the graphics are good? Because, come on, they are.

KH: [laughs] Okay, they're good. It's just... I think we can do even better. Since we were making this Tekken for other platforms the process of making Tekken 6 was extremely difficult. It's the first time we've done this so we had to get used to a whole other system.

“I am actually a bit disappointed with the graphics in Tekken 6 and would like to apologise to the fans”

KATSUHIRO HARADA

OPS: In some ways, Tekken 6 feels like a 'best of' package. The fighting seems similar to the earlier games, with counter-moves and various throws simplified for faster fighting. Was that deliberate?

KH: Again, I have to say we really listened to what the fans wanted from the series. Lots of characters, some of the moves that we haven't seen before – plus the continuation of the story which, believe it or not, fans do follow.

OPS: An impressive element is the ability to customise the characters. You can pretty much change any and every part of each character, not to mention multiple costumes for each one. Then you can go online and show off your design skills. Was this for the fans too?

KH: Absolutely. People genuinely enjoy customising their favourite characters, making them individual to the gamer. We've seen some pretty amazing customisations out there so it's obviously catching on.

OPS: Final question, what do you feel most proud of with this new entry?

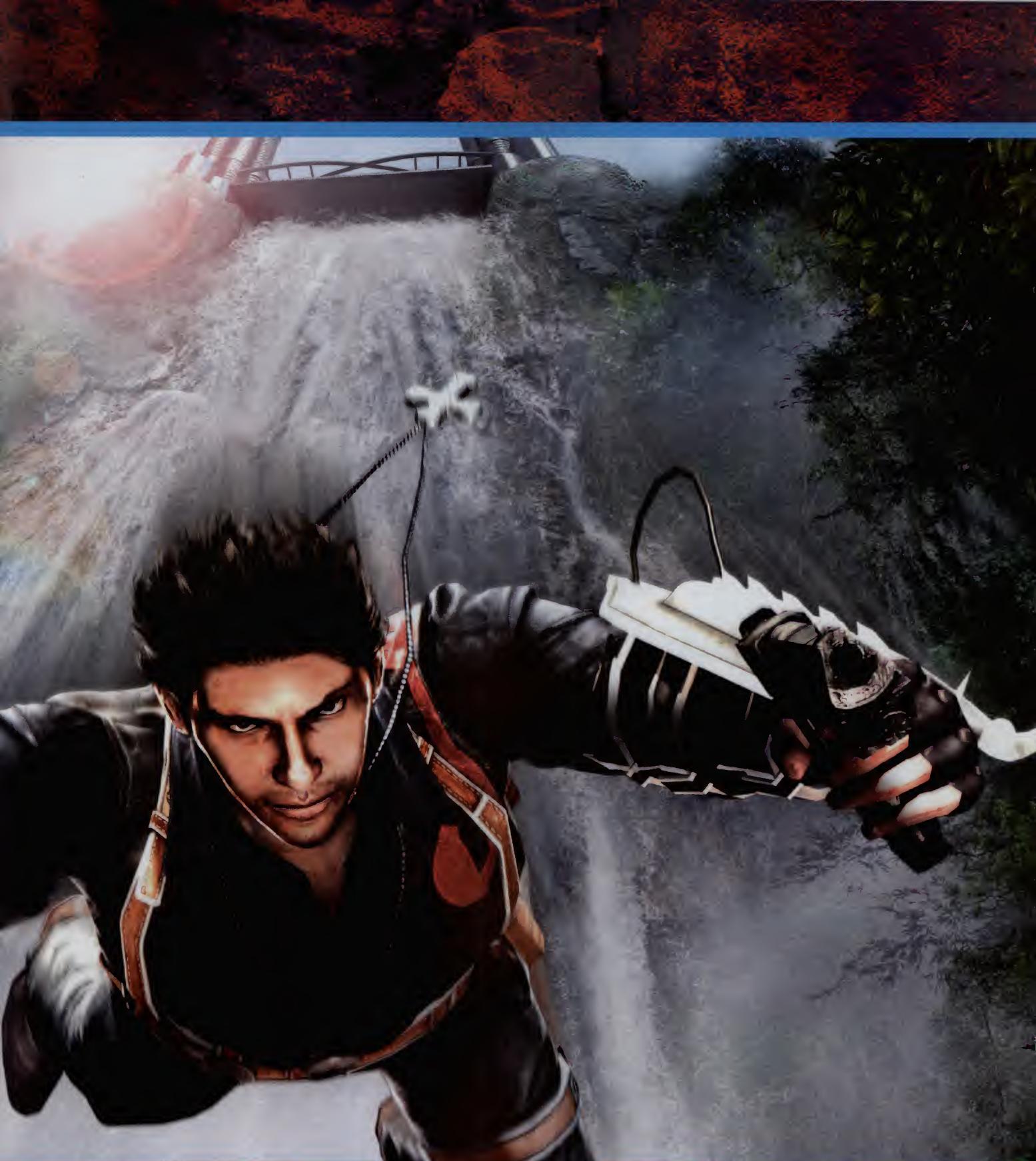
KH: There are many things... but if I had to pick one: the full-time animation variable blur. It's a new technique for the series and can be built upon. I hope everyone gets to enjoy Tekken 6.

Words: Luke Reilly



How Swedish developer Avalanche plans to trigger a genre landslide...

ADV GAME SPY GAME



A few years ago now, OPS spent approximately 18 hours in Stockholm, Sweden. We remember there was kooky modular furniture in the lobby of our hotel, a replica Viking longship near the restaurant we ate dinner at, and that it was daylight virtually the whole time we were there (the sun doesn't set until around midnight during the height of summer). We also remember the game we were in the country to see, because it made an incredible first

impression.

It was August 2005, and the final part of our whistlestop European press junket with Eidos was a stopover in Sweden to see *Just Cause* — a new IP from a new studio full of guys with names that made them sound like they wouldn't have been out of place on your

doorstep in a horned helmet asking if they could permanently borrow your wife and all your belongings.

We came home impressed with the simply massive scale of the world Avalanche had created, stinging to get a hold of it ourselves. We eventually did and, although there were portions of it that disappointed, it pushed our PS2 to the outer limit and beyond. We'd never been a part of a playground this big.

However, *Just Cause* seemed like a game

HOOKED

The developers of *Bionic Commando* will play *Just Cause 2* and be green with envy. While it's true Rico doesn't swing like the bloke in *Bionic Commando*, the grappling mechanic is so much more accurate and user-friendly. On that note, it'll also be tough to warm to *Lost Planet 2*'s stodgy old grappling hook again after playing this – this one is just so much better. Think of everything you wanted to be able to do in the original but couldn't. Be prepared for most of this to be made possible.

The Mexican Spider-Man: ¡El Arácnido!

"Because I'm freeeee... freefalling..."



that was just too ambitious for the hardware. Plenty of visual concessions had to be made to keep things running and to compensate for the enormous environment. It appeared that, while it had the ability to build an astonishing island, Avalanche didn't have the time or resources to properly fill it with enough to do, or fine tune some of the stunt controls (particularly the grappling hook).

Just Cause 2, the series debut on PS3, looks to address all of that.

Just Cause 2 takes place on the fictional island of Panau, which, for the purposes of a little geographic 'reference', is located in the Malay Archipelago. Panau, a dictatorship, is a melting pot of cultural influences from several different Asian nationalities such as Malay, Thai, Chinese and Japanese. It's vastly different from the South American-infused San Esperito of the original, plus it has a wide range of climate zones. Zooming out on the

“It's vastly different from the South American-infused San Esperito of the original, plus it has a wide range of climate zones”



Although there are two guys here, there is no multiplayer in JC2

Pictured: the worst place to stand



The tower above, pre Rico-fication



The grappling hook and parachute are now so seamlessly integrated they've become fundamental combat options

for people who like their shit supersized.

"The game world is 32 by 32 kilometres, over 1000 square kilometres, which is actually the same size as the first game," says producer Daniel Willfor. "Size was never a specific goal for *Just Cause 2*, instead we've put a lot of focus into making sure the game world was filled with fun and meaningful stuff to do. We've also redesigned the mission structure to really take better advantage of the size this time around."

To put that in perspective, *Just Cause 2* is bigger than Singapore. But what are the benefits of going so huge?

"Having so much freedom in this huge playground gives *Just Cause 2* a really unique and epic atmosphere and it adds a lot of well-needed variety into the genre," says Willfor.

This well-needed variety comes in the form of a slate of major improvements and tweaks to the movement and combat systems. *Just Cause 2* feels very much like

the game we'd have liked the original to be – memories of struggling with that game's fickle grapple system come flooding back.

"Both Avalanche and Eidos felt that the original game very much felt like it had a sequel waiting to be made," says Willfor. "That's why we started the work on *Just Cause 2* by identifying the key areas that

we wanted to improve – we wanted to go even further with the stunts and integrate them into everything

you do, we wanted to make the world is more filled with content and activities and we wanted to improve AI and combat."

This is immediately evident from just the three example missions we were able to play ourselves. The grappling hook and parachute are now so seamlessly integrated they've become fundamental combat options. You can fire the grappling hook into virtually everything. If you can see it chances are your grapple will lodge in it. Shoot it into a building and you'll zip straight there. Fire it into a tree and Rico will squat against the trunk until you tell him to do otherwise. You can fire from this position too, so it's entirely possible to zip to a wall above a clump of enemies and mow them down from above. We appreciated the small touches too, like the invisible helping-hand you get when launching Rico from his perched position to a flat surface if there's one above him.

Using the grappling hook and parachute in tandem almost removes the need for

The chopper, just before you get to it

vehicles. You can slingshot yourself into the air by pulling your 'chute mid-zip, and subsequently tug yourself across the world by firing into the ground ahead of you and using the speed to lift yourself back into the air.

You can even use it on enemies. Fire it at a soldier and you can wrench them in closer, peppering them with bullets as they flail through the air towards you. You can hang foes from structures and posts; attach them to moving vehicles, exploding barrels and even each other. At one point we strung a poor bastard to a gas canister, put a bullet in it and sent the two of them soaring into the stratosphere.



Possibly the worst place to erect a tightrope



Take that, inanimate object!

In other words, there's been a massive evolution in the grappling system – was this how Avalanche wanted it in the first place, or did it gradually grow into this?

Rico had a grappling hook already in the original *Just Cause* but it was a bit limited," says Willfor. "For *Just Cause 2*, we knew we wanted to make more use of it and integrate it into combat and moving around. The key to doing that was to make it permanently attached to Rico's left arm and give it its own dedicated button so it can be used at any time. Many of the ideas have been there from the beginning but we at Avalanche really believe in working with ideas organically so it's definitely evolved a bit from the original concept."

The improvements don't stop there, however. Dual wielding, a fine-tuned hybrid targeting system that allows you fine aim at locked-on enemies – the list is long.

"There were so many things that we wanted to improve that we ended up redoing pretty much all content from scratch," says Willfor. "I don't think there's a single art asset reused, all new models, all new animations, all new environments, et cetera. We've also completely redesigned the structure of the game to give the player more freedom and to make it possible for the game world to be

filled to the brim with activities. The AI has also been completely redone from scratch to allow us to really improve combat. On top of that, the new version of the Avalanche Engine has been heavily updated from the version used in the original *Just Cause*.

"While we were pretty clear with what we wanted to achieve, we really haven't taken the easy route out and there's definitely been a lot of hard work but in the end it has really paid off. We feel that *Just Cause 2* has been improved in every way possible compared to the original."

Just Cause had some imaginative missions (chasing down cruise missiles and leaping from plane to plane for a mid-air brawl with an unruly dictator was one highlight) but the sequel is set to add even more.

The first mission we played was a simple destruction objective: Bringing down some large cranes and a few smaller structures was the plan, and doing so was enough to trigger our next task.

This one had us infiltrating a secured compound in order to find the location of a witness one of the local factions wanted grabbed. We fought our way through the facility, found the terminal that would give us the information we needed and waited for

extraction. Extraction, in this case, was firing a grapple into the underbelly of the incoming chopper and being yanked to safety. The safety was temporary, as the convoy transporting the witness was close by. Still dangling from beneath the chopper we were flown over the convoy, detached and zipped to the last moving vehicle without even touching the ground. Clambering over the 4x4 we zipped to the second vehicle and hung over the front of it. From here you can shimmy to each side, firing with your spare hand at the enemies silly enough to poke their heads from the cabin. Climbing back to the roof (as simple as moving the left stick) we zipped to the lead vehicle – the one containing the witness. We thought it'd be prudent to take out the chase vehicles before hijacking our target one. Gunfire does the job, although you can fire a grappling hook into a moving car and fire the other end into a solid roadside object. Doing so will violently jerk it off the road.

We delivered the witness – who, despite the fact he was being kidnapped, happily changed vehicles with us at one point. Hey, if realism were high on the agenda the country would be carpeted in discarded parachutes from Rico's inexplicably enchanted backpack.

The next mission was total old-school

RECIPE FOR DISASTER

Just Cause 2 is what happens when you combine easily-identifiable bad guys, Antonio Banderas, a grappling hooks, loads of guns, James Bond, parachutes and slight motion sickness. Observe.



“An easy way of describing it is the game *Mercenaries 2* likely wishes it was.”

You, your jeep is on fire



James Bond. We needed to get a broadcast out via a nearby dish located on top of an absurdly massive skyscraper. There were two external elevators going up and down on one side which we used to get to the top (we grappled to the underside of one) but we could've also hijacked a nearby chopper and parachuted to the top. After a fierce gun battle we planted the broadcast and were instructed to destroy the dish once it was finished. Some finesse grappling and a few well-placed explosives charges later we leapt from the dish into the sky and freefell from the building. The camera swung beneath us as the topside of the skyscraper lit up in a fireball.

Just Cause 2 feels good and it looks

good. At this point in development that's all we can ask for. An easy way of describing it is the game *Mercenaries 2* likely wishes it was.

But the open-world genre is an ultra-competitive one – how does Willfor sum it up for gamers, particularly those who haven't experienced the original?

“In *Just Cause 2*, you will do things that you have never done in any other game,” he says. “It's a really unique experience exploring this huge and beautiful game world and you can easily spend hours just playing around with the stunts, grappling hook and parachute. You quickly get into a state of mind where you take all the freedom and versatility of the main character for granted

and you suddenly realise you miss all those features in other games.

“It's action packed, a little bit insane and really injects a bit of well-needed self-irony into the genre.”

It's clear Avalanche like islands, and we happen to live on the biggest one in the world. Any chance of Rico heading down under?

“The agency that Rico works for tends to operate anywhere in the world where it suits their interests, so who knows where they'll end up next?” says Willfor.

We dare say we're a few generations away from seeing the whole of Australia in a game though. Maybe they can start a little smaller.

Tasmania? ▶



THIS IS WHAT \$60 MILLION BUYS YOU

Building a car in *Gran Turismo 5*: The process

Regardless of how you do the sums, \$60 million is what most people would refer to as several shitloads of money. The US\$60 million budget estimated by Kazunori Yamauchi during an interview at the US SEMA motor show is less than the alleged budgets for *GTAIV* and *Metal Gear Solid 4*, but it's still an incredibly fat stack of cash. You could buy 35

Bugatti Veyrons for that.

When you see the amount of time and resources building just one car in *Gran Turismo 5* takes, however, you start to see just where the money went.

Remember, the original *Gran Turismo* was developed by less than 20 people, and back then they could design a car per day.

Times have changed.



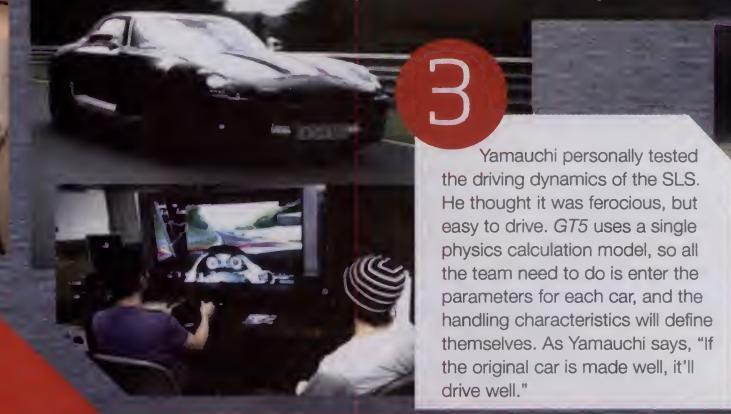
1

After what we assume is a fair amount of initial research the process begins...



2

In the case of the new Mercedes SLS AMG Kazunori Yamauchi and members of Polyphony Digital visited Germany to actually see and photograph the car behind closed doors. We can't be sure how many cars outside of Japan they visit personally, but they have packed suitcases at work. No joke.



3

Yamauchi personally tested the driving dynamics of the SLS. He thought it was ferocious, but easy to drive. *GT5* uses a single physics calculation model, so all the team need to do is enter the parameters for each car, and the handling characteristics will define themselves. As Yamauchi says, "if the original car is made well, it'll drive well."

FAIR DINKUM

We know there are Australian cars in *GT5* because Kazunori Yamauchi told us personally. But which ones? No idea. Here are a dozen we'd get a fraction moist if we saw in the final product. There'll be nearly 1000 cars in *GT5*, surely 12 Aussie ones isn't too much to ask? Come on!



Joss Supercar
Australia's first mid-engine supercar, the Joss Supercar can do 0-100km/h in 2.98 seconds. Basically, you wouldn't have got halfway through that sentence...



HSV Clubsport R8 by Walkinshaw Performance
We'll tip this over the more exclusive W427 because they look basically the same, and the R8 is faster. Checkmate.



FPV F6
This is a proper performance car with few equals. A blue-collar punch in the face for its expensive Euro peers. It's only got six cylinders, but it goes like absolute stink.



HSV Maloo R8
Kazunori Yamauchi recognised a pic of one of these as soon as he saw it. He's seen The Stig thrash one around on *Top Gear*. Hopefully that a good sign. Would be epic.



FPV Super Pursuit
You can't have one without the other. There were pick-up trucks in *GT4*, so the time is ripe for some real utes. Surely somebody has doing their homework on these?



Ford XY Falcon GTHO Phase III
Australia's greatest ever muscle car, and the fastest saloon in the world when it was released. Come one Polyphony, this one's a total must!



4

The car is subsequently pieced together and designed by hand, polygon by polygon, back at Polyphony Digital. This process can take up to six months.



5

The result?
Astonishing.



Holden Torana A9X
The A9X was built to win races. That's that. It was so good Brocky set a lap record at the 1979 Bathurst 1000 on the last lap. The ultimate Torana would be perfect in the ultimate driving sim.



Holden VK Commodore SS
Group A Group 3
One of the most fondly-remembered hot Commodores, and apparently one of Peter Brock's favourites. Bring on the Blue Meanie!



Ford XB Falcon GT
It was *Mad Max*'s car. Isn't that enough? Damn, maybe we should have also taken a copy of *Love the Beast* over for the Polyphony guys. Wait, maybe we can mail a copy over...



Valiant Charger R/T E49
The fastest accelerating Aussie car for years after its release, this was a serious car and one of the coolest Oz cars ever. A six-pack that had V8s shivering.

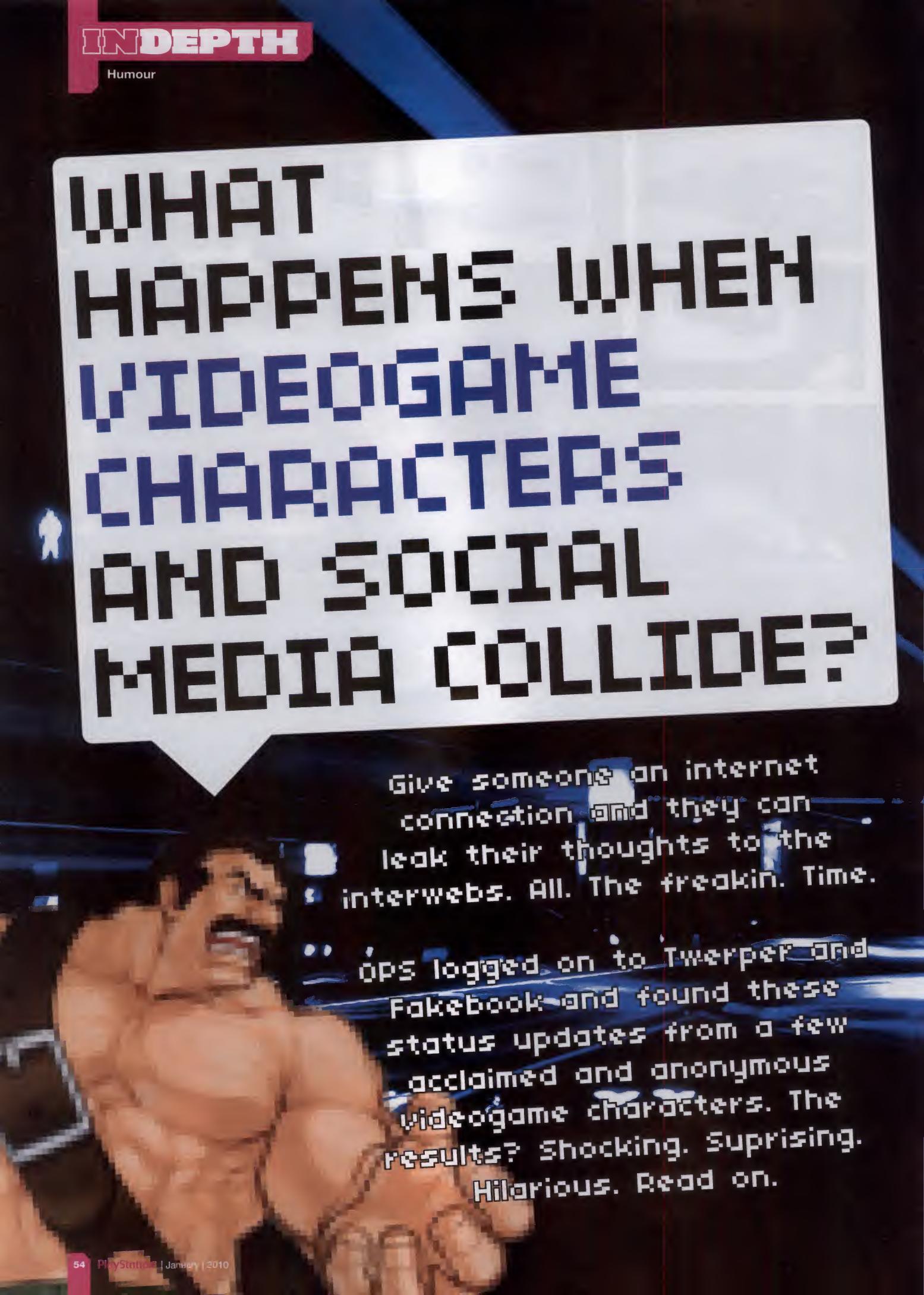


Holden VZ Monaro CV8
A future classic, the resurrection of the Monaro proved two-door pony cars were back in business. This featured in *GT4*, so we reckon it'll be a real chance.



Elfin MS8 Streamliner
This snazzy two-seater roadster certainly wouldn't look out of place in *GT5*. The V8 under the bonnet won't hurt its chances either. Wouldn't be the first game this has been in.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN VIDEOGAME CHARACTERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COLLIDE?



Give someone an internet connection and they can leak their thoughts to the interwebs. All. The freakin. Time.

OPS logged on to Twerper and Facebook and found these status updates from a few acclaimed and anonymous video game characters. The results? Shocking. Surprising. Hilarious. Read on.

Imran Zakhaev misses his goddamn arm. Sigh...

10 hours ago · Comment · Like

 Captain MacMillan likes this

Captain Price You're disarmed lol
9 hours ago · Report

Captain Price Seriously though, how are you even alive bro?
9 hours ago · Report

Vladimir Makarov Coriolis effect FTW!
7 hours ago · Report

Write a comment...

Gabe Logan is drunk agin . i saved all u punks. u would all b dead wthout me. who remmbers gabe? nobody. wheres MY Sequel?? Lian i love u

Yesterday at 9:46am · Comment · Like

 **Sam Fisher** You're pathetic Logan.
Yesterday at 9:58am · Report

 **Solid Snake** Gabe, listen to me. Maybe there just isn't a place in the world anymore for like us. We're killers. That's what we do. But you can't give up. You need to go on, fighting the good fight - because there won't be anybody around to fight your battles for you. Find something to believe in, and find it for yourself. We're all born with an expiration date. No one lasts forever. Life is nothing but a grace period - for turning our genetic material into the next generation. The data of life is transferred from parent to child. That's how it works.

Yesterday at 10:40am · Report

 **Sam Fisher** Jesus Snake, don't you have some Metal Gear to play with?
Yesterday at 10:42am · Report

 **Solid Snake** Metal... Gear?
Yesterday at 10:42am · Report

 **Lian Xing** Gabe, please stop calling. There's somebody else.
Yesterday at 1:32pm · Report

 **Sam Fisher** Yeah, there's a Third Echelon in my pants, and I've given Lian full security clearance. Bam.
Yesterday at 1:35pm · Report

Write a comment...

MIKE_HAGGAR



Punched through wall to exit EB in disgust. You kids need better role models. Hopefully Duke Nukem is still on my rolodex back in the office

about 7 hours ago from Twerpperific

50 Cent has a game?! We're glorifying CRIME now?! In my day we rewarded criminals by punching 'em outta 12th storey windows (in wheelchairs).

about 7 hours ago from Twerpperific

What the F--K is a Kingdom Heart? Who are these sissies with the smegma in their hair? Are... they... male? Why isn't that duck wearing PANTS?

about 7 hours ago from Twerpperific

Browsing through the store now. WTF happened to gaming? Where's the arsekicking section? Where are the judicial, taxpayer-funded headbutts?

about 7 hours ago from Twerpperific

At Metro EB Games trying to buy a "beat 'em up". Salesjerk says "what's a beatemup?". Explained the genre 2 him via the medium of bitchslap.

about 7 hours ago from Twerpperific

...broke his arm in three places, headbutted him, threw him through a shop window. Layman's terms: I just made Slampovich my bitch, Zangief.

1:45 PM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

REUNION CANCELLED. Biff couldn't hack losing. Said something smart arse about his "comrade Zangief" using my pant strap costume in SFIV...

1:41 PM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

...Biff ain't so buff anymore, folks. I'm typing with one hand and "wrestling" him with my left. Biff's been pushing too many pencils...

1:00 PM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

Biff Slampovich has rocked up and is trying an "Arnie/Carl Weathers Predator armwrestle handshake" with me. Hang on a sec...

12:54 PM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

Stingray's here now. Soon we'll get beer & reminisce. Will also grab a bite to eat - Metro City style (punching bins for hamburgers & shit)

12:39 PM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

Saturday Night Slammasters reunion 2morrow. Gunloc, El Stingray, and Biff Slampovich (one of Zangief's dipshit "protégées") will be there ;)

1:58 AM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

Still haven't heard from my Jessica. Keep getting prank calls from Zangief though. Sneaky Russian should have been named 'ZanGRIEF'

1:27 AM Nov 3rd from Twerpperific

Saw the Doc. Says my "sitting down problem" is coz I tuck punks against my junk, jump and land on my arse (on the road). Piledriving=piles :

9:19 PM Nov 1st from Twerpperific

Zangief=a slippery Cossack. He STOLE my lariat move for SFII. Just needed to get that off my (massive) chest-which is bigger than his.

1:27 PM Nov 1st from Twerpperific

Piledriven (piledrove?) a punk chick - and not in a hot way. Shame we couldn't have met under different circumstances... she had handcuffs.

1:19 PM Nov 1st from Twerpperific

Catching train to office. Rush hour commute is murder. I've killed fifteen punks in this carriage alone. Why? No tickets...

1:04 PM Nov 1st from Twerpperific



Crash_B

I'm getting a gun

1.07 PM Feb 5th, 2008 from Wumpa2go

All pretty-boy Drake is just me but with a lame shirt and a gun and no attitude.

1.05 PM Feb 5th, 2008 from Wumpa2go

I HATE Nathan Drake

1.03 PM Feb 5th, 2008 from Wumpa2go

I hate Nathan Drake

11.25 AM Feb 3rd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

Almost at Naughty Dog. They said to wear a shirt but I thought STFU. I'm Crash!!

10.57 AM Feb 3rd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

@Coco_B Ur dumb

3.01 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from web

@Coco_B Sis I was just kidding lol

3.00 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from web

Is it just me or is Coco pretty hot?

2.57 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from web

Getting a beer. Soooo excited about meeting 2moro!

2.00 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from web

Vommed on phone.

1.43 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from web

@Aku_sqrd \$5? Lol woteva. I'll eat it anyway.

1.13 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

Found a burger in my pants pocket. WTF? Still warm

1.11 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

@ Aku_sqrd My head's banging. Thx 4 the tequila last nite bro. Next one's on me soon as my cheque from Naughty Dog clears.

12.10 PM Feb 2nd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

@ Aku_sqrd Dude were clubbing where ru?

2.00 AM Feb 2nd, 2008 from Wumpa2go

To all my fans. The guys at Naughty Dog called and said they had some news! They want 2meet in 2 days!! Reckon they're going 2 beg for a new Crash smash!!!!!! so long Vivendi!!!!

10:30 AM Feb 1st, 2008 from Wumpa2go

Fistbump Tyson?



You are about to fistbump Tyson. He will be informed of this on his home page. Booyah!

Fistbump

Fistbump

High-five Elliot?



You are about to high-five your bro, Elliot. He will be informed of this on his home page. Hooah!

High-five

Double high-five

Go back to back with Tyson?



You are about to ineffectively cut down a dozen gunmen with Tyson. He will be informed of this on his home page. Yeeeaaahhh booyyyeee!

Shoot!

SHOOT!

Henchman_E_291



9:26 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

@Henchman_B_045 Dude?

9:25 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

@Henchman_B_045 Dude, you okay?

9:22 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

@Henchman_B_045 What do you mean you just saw a cardboard box walk by?

9:20 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

F**k this rain.

9:13 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

Now my socks are wet.

8:59 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

Will this rain ever stop? Jesus.

8:55 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

I feel like I'm walking around in circles.... sigh...

8:48 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

As soon as this is over I'm quitting. I'm just gonna concentrate on finishing my novel and raising my eight beautiful children.

8:42 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

@Henchman_B_045 Dude, I don't trust that Revolver Ocelot. For all we know he may just take the giant robot, blow up the ship and leave us all here to drown.

8:27 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

@Henchman_B_045 Huh? There's a giant robot below deck? How giant? Man, can you believe this rain?

8:23 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

Guard duty?! Man, this gig blows. Why do I have to stand here in the rain? We're on a boat. What am I guarding against? Fish?

8:01 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc

Just boarded the U.S.S. Discovery with the boys. Didn't get the memo we were just going to shoot all these Marines and stuff. Seems kinda harsh. Hope it stops raining soon.

7:55 PM August 8th, 2007 from iMerc



Duke Nukem is happy to help you finish that dream you were having about me.

4 hours ago · Comment · Like

356,783 people like this



Lara Croft You said you were going to take that video down!

3 hours ago · Report



Duke Nukem Duke says a lot of things baby.

3 hours ago · Report

Write a comment...



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Nathan Drake is feeling a little haunted by the 900 or so people I've just killed over the past couple of days.

6 hours ago · Comment · Like



Elena Fisher I think I'm gonna be sick...

3 hours ago · Report

Write a comment...



Nathan Drake can still hear their screams. Literally, I've murdered, like, nearly 2000 people over the past two years.



6 hours ago · Comment · Like



2 people like this

Write a comment...



Kratos_GOW

Impaeld b mssive rock speear Fk yuu0, ARes. ill b bcak

2:07 AM Sep 24th, 1183 BC from iHermes

OMFG just finish a bazillion puzzles. Killed some Minotaurs. WTF Pandora's Box is an ACTUAL box?! Lame. Just about to open it upfljwehjlewljl

2:06 AM Sep 24th, 1183 BC from iHermes

Athens is a bust – Ares stomping about like a giant dick. Met gnarly chick who reckons if I gain access to Pandora's Box that'll sort him out. Sounds HOT.

5:15 PM Sep 22nd, 1183 BC from iHermes

FINALLY got to Athens. Two months of non-stop, wall-to-wall experience orb gathering kind of sucks. Serious chafeage.

3:15 PM Sep 22nd, 1183 BC from iHermes

Yeah. You read that last Twerp right – I'M ON A BOAT, mofos – take a long hard look at it! Speaking of long/hard, I'm off to earn more 'experience' orbs.

10:15 AM Jul 16th, 1183 BC from iHermes

Killed a HYDRA this morning, bitches. Gonna celebrate by having a THREE-way with some hotties on my boat now. Sweet sweet irony.

9:08 AM Jul 16th, 1183 BC from iHermes



Gordon_Freeman

...
12:24 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

12:04 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

11:21 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

11:02 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

9:44 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

9:12 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

7:56 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

7:29 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

6:30 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17

5:58 PM Aug 22nd, 2020 from City17



Out_runner

@heart_attack_grl 'Rank A'? We drove from the coast, through the forest and in to the city – on the other side of the country! I don't even know if that means you had a good time. And those smiley faces – what the hell!?

7:30 PM March 15th, 2009 from SplashNet

This bitch is crazy. My foot's flat to the floor and she yells at me when I hit the grass to avoid some station wagon with a family inside. I think she might be bi-polar.

7:04 PM March 13th, 2009 from SplashNet

Went for a drive with blondie – total nightmare. She kept telling me to go faster and faster and keep passing cars. She wants to go again, but to go 'hard'. Bit presumptuous.

8:06 PM March 12th, 2009 from SplashNet

Hmmm. I can only tune in six or seven stations on the radio, and they keep playing the same crappy tunes over and over again.

1:10 PM March 10th, 2009 from SplashNet

Hell yeah she does! We're going for a drive tomorrow. Said she wants to go far away.

12:55 PM March 10th, 2009 from SplashNet

Just got a new car: a Ferraril I think blondie likes fast motors.

12:53 PM March 10th, 2009 from SplashNet

There's this girl I really like but she's leaving me cold. I've seen her with some other dude in his convertible, but I heard he crashed it but they're both fine. I'll call her.

10:07 AM March 4th, 2009 from SplashNet

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THE PlayStation® Official Magazine - Australia

AWARDS



2009

Don't miss your chance
to get involved!

The good year 2009CE was a glorious one, and we gobbled up every game that sprung clear of its wonderfully fruity loins. But all good things must come to an end, and while we're now looking wide-eyed into the bright future that is 2010, it'd be remiss of us not to send out 2009 with a big old bash. That's why we're kicking off the *Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia* Awards – and we need YOU to get involved. Our panel of experts is hard at work on a swag of categories, but we need your help for the big one – the Game of the Year.

To get involved, email us at OPS@themediafactory.com.au and let us know what your Game of the Year is and why. Alternatively, hop onto our Facebook page at tinyurl.com/OPSAus, or rip out the form on the right and send it back to us. The best explanations will be printed alongside the winning game when we announce it early next year – and the most definitive argument will win one lucky reader a copy of it!

Every vote counts, so don't let your favourite miss out on a gong!
Get voting!

See further instructions right.



“Our panel of experts is hard at work on a swag of categories, but we need your help for the big one - the Game of the Year”

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_____ is my Game of the Year because:



YOUR DETAILS

Name: _____

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Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

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HOW TO ENTER

To become a part of The 2009 Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia Awards send your nomination to OPS@themediafactory.com.au - the subject line should read Game of the Year. Readers are entitled to one entry. Alternatively, log onto our Facebook page at tinyurl.com/OPSAus and locate the Game of the Year discussion, or send in this form to OPS Game of the Year, PO Box 1643, Bondi Junction 1355. Chance will play no part in determining the winner of the game giveaway, and the judge's decision will be final.

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“Restoring the balance is going to take a long, long time, as *Darksiders* is one of the hardest games you'll play”

DARKSIDERS

REVIEW RATING



10 Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an amazing fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible praise.

9 Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the very best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise.

8 Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a bunch of moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

6 Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

5 Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but few will want to play a game that half sucks.

4 Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of ‘bad’ just as there are degrees of ‘good’. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

3 Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

2 Terrible: Virtually nothing good here at all, and definitely not worth the effort of removing the wrapper.

1 The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality.

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We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs!





DARKSIDERS

Because peace is for pussies

Darksiders is a game that wears its influences on its sleeve. Its mythology comes from the book of Revelations. Graphics are from comics – its lead designer, Joe Madureira, has illustrated and written many. Nods to *Prototype*, *inFamous*, and even bits and pieces of the *Resident Evil* series can be noted. Gameplay is a combination of *Devil May Cry*, *God of War*, ancient platform/adventure game *Soul Reaver*, and Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda* series. Its difficulty? Pure *Ninja Gaiden*.

Some background. War, one of the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, arrives on Earth believing that the final battle between the three kingdoms – Heaven, Hell, and the Kingdom of

Man – was in full swing. You're given control of War at the peak of his powers, just long enough to find out he's been duped in to arriving early for the party at the end of the world. War gets blamed for Man's destruction but is determined to find out just what happened. He manages to wrangle his way back to Earth a century later after bargaining with the Charred Council (kind of like the Senate, but set in The Temple of Doom). If he fails he'll have been punished, but right now he has the opportunity to set things straight. Bound to him is The Watcher, a shadowy figure voiced by Mark Hamill who is tasked with keeping a leash on War.

Taking the role of War, you land back on the ground with your powers stripped and only your sword, the Chaoeater, to fend off demons that roam around. Everyone, from the hordes of hell to the angelic knights of heaven, is homing in to your skull. Getting all that power back and restoring the balance is going to take a long, long time, as *Darksiders* is one of the hardest games you'll play and is quite slow paced. The often maddening difficulty level is a combination of the amount of enemies that are thrown at you (as well as how many slices it takes to finish them off), and also the puzzle elements as you trawl throughout the glorious environments. It's not so much rewards your graft as makes

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BRONZE AWARD

"Dude, I am off the chain! Off the chain? Come on!" ↗



“Darksiders is a game that wears its influences on its sleeve”

you feel less like a loser who couldn't hit a few buttons and sort out a simple 'toss the lever and open the door' puzzle.

Combat is fairly straightforward. ⌂ is your main attack button, ⌂ acts as a modifier. All of War's moves look devastating, whether you're mashing out a one-button combo, powering up for a baseball bat-like swing, or sending a demon skyward before cutting it to ground with grand, swooping justice. After 'restoring the balance' for long enough on a demon you get to finish it off with ⌂ which always appears above its head (or mandibles). This involves something as low-key as inserting your sword through its gut, or jumping on its back and separating its head from its neck, to even more detailed manoeuvres like

taking off each arm and slicing it in to bits small enough to stir fry.

That's just the smaller drones. Larger bosses often have their hearts ripped out, stabbed through the eye, or have part of a train inserted into their jaw. Kratos would be proud. It sounds gory, but the way in which it's presented is perfect comic book fare, with thick lashings of stunning black, red and purple ink-like liquid spewing out. It's easy to see a lot of imagination has gone in to their design and attack patterns: patience and lateral thinking are a prerequisite unless you want to fail.

After a while you get access to secondary weapon, such as the scythe and a massive glove. These are mapped to ⌂, and it's a pity that there aren't combos available to seamlessly mix up the sword and scythe or sword and fist. Instead, their attacks are activated separately and each does have its own strengths and purposes – the glove is used to unblock particular passageways, and also to quickly and effectively shift objects around. The scythe, meanwhile, is best for large groups that are swarming around. Like

A GRAND DISC-OVERY

There are no loading screens in *Darksiders*. Actually, that's a lie. The only time a loading screen occurs is when you die and are sent back to the nearest waypoint. The whole world streams painlessly off the disc, and there's no install when you do boot up. How Vigil did it is a mystery, but it earns a thumbs up from us.



↗ You're gonna need a bigger boot

your blade, these have certain combos and special moves that operate in the same way. Both the Choseater and secondary weapons level-up according to how much they've been used, to a maximum of four levels, so your favourite weapon becomes more useful over time. The difference when they upgrade immediately noticeable, though the rate at which tougher enemies (or just more of them) appear puts them to the test.

While the majority of the combat is close and very personal, ranged weapons are vital, and Zelda's influence appears with the Cross-Blade. The Cross-Blade can lock on to enemies, and when charged up it grinds into the last one it hits, earning an impressive combo. Super useful, as you're able to send it off, distracting one enemy allowing you to wave the Choseater around, building up the combo. It also transfers fire on to other flammable objects and this property is vital for solving a substantial amount of head-scratchers. Several hours in you'll also get hold of Mercy (a pistol with infinite rounds) and, at the start of the game, a horn that communicates with giant golem gatekeepers,

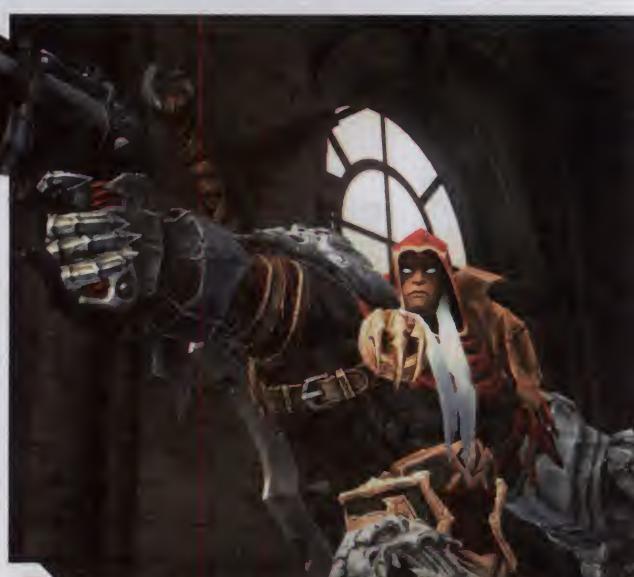


INFO

GENRE: ADVENTURE
RELEASE: JANUARY 7
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: VIGIL GAMES
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$109.95

YO JOE

Joe Madureira – often just shortened to Joe Mad – has a string of comic books to his name, including *X-Men*, his own *Battle Chasers* and *The Ultimates*. The man's skills and style shine through here: characters with massive shoulders and limbs, bold, angular features and striking colours. Although Earth is in strife it definitely doesn't suffer from next-gen brown.



"But, urgh, you were the wind beneath my wings!"

"Wait, shoot first, or questions? I always forget this!"



TIME THAT WAR DEVOTES TO

45% Lopping limbs

25% Riding ponies

20% Squinting

10% Talking in awkward sentences

and also sends weaker demons onto their butts. These three make up half of the six ranged weapons available, and are switched around via the D-pad on the fly.

Since your powers have been nixed, you're left to build them back up courtesy of Vulgrim, a *Resident Evil*-like merchant who appears in certain spots, ready to trade souls and knick-knacks you collect for moves, weapons and health potions. He also opens up shortcuts so you can travel between explored areas quickly. Blue souls equal currency, found in pretty much everything (including, oddly, wooden benches) and will erupt out of whatever demon or object you've obliterated and into your coffers. Same goes for green (health) and yellow souls ('wrath' or magic).

These magic powers are, as you'd expect, for special moves, like a ground spike attack that deals massive damage to surrounding foes. Vulgrim, again, sells more Wrath powers but you'll be adequately equipped with your hands-on weapons of reckoning. Add in to this Runes that augment your weaponry or vital statistics and *Darksiders* has a light RPG feel about it. There is a lot to grasp but it's presented in a way that's very accessible.

You always have the basic tools and moves

to progress, though whether these are powerful or not depend on your willingness to collect and spend. It takes a couple of hours to actually feel like you're making any progress, as the world is massive and War is a slow-moving kind of guy. He's also not very personable, just scowling and spitting out guttural Gandalf-like phrases in cutscenes. Sure, he's a horseman of the apocalypse: he's not there to be your best friend, but even Kratos – a dude who's always in a grade-A pissed-off mood and chops off heads for a crust – is character that people want to explore more.

Although War's been blessed with a dash move which is perfect in combat, allowing swift and suitable dodges both on the ground and in the air (once you've bought it from Vulgrim) it doesn't really translate to rapidly covering the massive landscape. The first time you make your way through a ruined city or dank cavern you'll be decimating goons en route so you don't really notice how slow he's going, but once you have to back track to a door that you now have the key for it starts to pinch. As a concession this dash move is used in all contexts, from covering ground to shimmying up walls, along pipes and even underwater. Ultimately, you'll end up mashing



“Although comparisons with Kratos et al are inevitable, they’re ultimately incorrect”

ALL THE SMALL THINGS

War is about as subtle as an anvil, but the world has some charming touches. While you have a massive sword you can also pick up cars, benches, boxes, parking meters and the occasional grand piano. Use a meter to spank a demon and coins will tumble out. Toss the piano and it shatters with a theatrical chord of destruction. We like.



Man, this guy is boned

the dash button just to get on with the task.

Usually between each all-in brawl or boss fight is a puzzle to solve, which can span several rooms or multiple storeys, and jumping around and gliding between platforms or across chasms is a cause for cursing when you're trying to guess what to do next. Gaps that look like they should be crossable aren't, and sometimes the level design lacks visual clues so figuring out where to go (or where you've just been) compounds the confusion. Although The Watcher, your guide topside, can be summoned by holding **L1** his advice is utterly generic and blatantly obvious, reciting the overall goal you're tasked with – why doesn't he offer a solution of where to go next? The puzzles are epic at times, building up to be part of something bigger and looping back to a point that was once a dead end. Every time you overcome a confusing section you'll feel gratified of finally figuring it out, and will soon pang for the next snack of satisfaction.

A horseman needs a steed, and you're reunited with Ruin, War's hellish horse, roughly eight hours in. That's a hell of a long time to be hoofing it on your own. Once you do have Ruin, he can be used in combat and also to get across the landscape but only in certain

situations. Summon him with **L1** and **R1** and Ruin will rise out of the ground in a trail of fire. As you both canter along, flames peel off behind him depending on how fast you go; very cool. Suffer a massive hit and the hell horse disappears but can be resurrected almost immediately. When you are riding your attack power is amplified, and he's reasonably easy to control; an organic extension using the same controls as if you were just on the ground. This is another moment of relief, a sizeable bite of satisfaction that adds another layer of gameplay. We just wish it happened sooner.

That's the phrase that shadows your time throughout your time in *Darksiders*. For every moment of controller-smashing frustration or blind wandering there's the feeling of over overcoming a fiendish puzzle and earning a slick, powerful combat move to replace it. So does that make it half pleasure, half pain? Yes, but in a good way. It demands patience, a good memory and close to 30 hours of your life with a character that needs more of a personality, but it rewards gradually with more powerful and complex attacks in order to effortlessly smash bad dudes, and instantly with glorious graphics and a rousing soundtrack. Plus, overcoming a troubling

puzzle, even if it is out spite, will make the adventurer in you shine.

Although comparisons with Kratos et al are inevitable, they're ultimately incorrect. *God of War* is an action platformer, *Darksiders* is an adventure game to make sissy men cry. There will be a sequel – we just hope it's an opportunity to make something good into something great.  **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:



- Looks like a comic book come to life; beautifully illustrated world
- Accessible but layered combat system



- Some clumsy level design
- Needs a persistent sprint button

VERDICT:

It'll test your patience but persevere and your sense of self-satisfaction will swell.

8



BAYONETTA

Looks like Sarah Palin isn't just gunning for the White House

The game design works at the 'Team Little Angels' division of Platinum Games have outdone themselves with *Bayonetta*, for the end result achieves an incredible feat of misdirection. Deception. False advertising, if you will. There is so much baroque, layered frivolity crammed into *Bayonetta* that the player is effectively distracted from the truth: that the whole thing is a scrolling beat-'em-up, a genre largely unchanged since the days of *Final Fight*.

Only instead of controlling Guy, Cody, or the man-tastic Mayor Mike Haggard, you control Bayonetta, a sultry witch adept in myriad arts of fetishistic slaughter. As the game begins, this dry anti-heroine knows as much about her destiny as the player does, since a case of amnesia has robbed her of her convoluted, saucy past. This unholy purpose is reconstructed bit by bit, through assorted

flashback sequences, mysterious cameos from edgy bit characters, and large chunks of text buried in a set of collectible book items.

Piecing together this mystery in turn distracts you from the utterly linear nature of your progression. There's no point in hunting around for alternate paths; if there's a corridor or a picturesque European street you've yet to traipse down, then it will inevitably lead to your next encounter with spontaneously appearing monsters; creatures that you must slay before the force field to the next zone is deactivated.

Even within zones there are plenty of invisible barriers, sealing off inviting ledges that in any other game might offer a slight tactical advantage. Pre-conceived notions of realism must be put out of your mind. This is not our world. Bayonetta can walk and run up walls, travel between dimensions, and slow down time. She doesn't need to hide. Bayonetta

faces her problems head-on.

To that end, the fighting mechanics are incredibly fluid. Bayonetta will have four guns equipped at any time: one in each hand, and one in the stiletto heel of each shoe. Their ammunition is not limited, but their utility is: this is not a third-person shooter. Rather than just tearing through and ventilating everything, she uses gunfire to punctuate the action. Holding down the last button press of one of her punch and kick attack combos will trigger a few seconds of fully automatic fire. The closest the game gets to a conventional shooter is when you execute a Bullet Climax attack; Bayonetta remains fixed to the spot for a brief moment, as you pivot her around, aiming with a more over-the-shoulder, *Resident Evil*-style view.

Combat is intense. There are multitudes of attack combos that chain together; these in turn are embellished by weapon upgrades and

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SILVER AWARD

buff lollipops, and cast in a new light with each new class of slavering, mindless enemy. Hardcore beat-'em-up enthusiasts will find the normal difficulty mode a meaty challenge, and there are two modes higher still. Those determined to excel will find plenty of punishing replay value.

Acknowledging that an uninterrupted 20 or 30 minutes of nerve-splitting intensity would be a little much, each level is broken down into discrete skirmishes, with scores, rankings, and medals awarded for each, and breaks for running through picturesque virtual scenery in between.

Everything is gorgeous; that point cannot be overstated. Whether you're smashing park benches for gold rings, solving simple time control puzzles, or just fighting deformed angelic hosts while standing on the wall of a clock tower that's in free fall, every pixel has been designed to dazzle. Central to this appeal is the character model of Bayonetta herself. ➔



INFO

GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA
DEVELOPER: PLATINUM GAMES
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$99.95

SEX SELLS

Every effort has been made to cram beautiful imagery and eye-dazzling FX into every moment, and every frame. Take the way Bayonetta moves. Press \times a second time after jumping, and giant butterfly wings will sprout from her back as she descends. When she lands, little butterflies will form and scatter from where her feet touch the ground. The rims of her glasses match the theme, and even her shadow looks like a stencil of the most elegant of the flying insects.

The idea seems to be to keep you so dazzled you forget you're playing a beat-'em-up. Works for us.

Bayonetta



TORTURE MOVES

Once Bayonetta's magic bar is full, you can press **Ⓐ** and **Ⓑ** together to summon medieval torture equipment out of thin air. As she pushes a monster into an iron maiden, or under a guillotine, you're invited to tap circle repeatedly to ensure the attack delivers as many 'megatons' as possible. A similar mechanic is employed at the end of boss fights, only you have to tap **Ⓑ** to pump up the 'gigatons.' It does not make a skerrick of sense, but at least it all feels internally consistent.



↗ Bazooka or telescope? You decide



WORSE THAN BETTER THAN
THE 'REAL' BAYONETTA DEVIL MAY CRY 4

Last night's cheese dream ↵



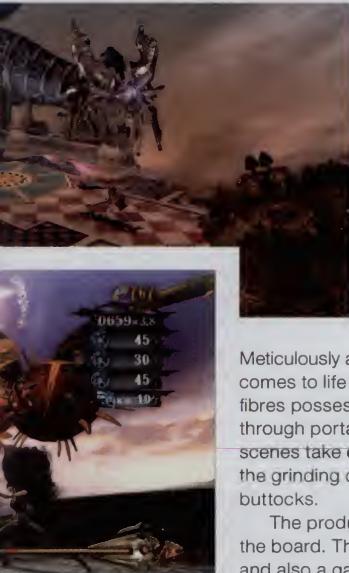
↗ Bayonetta's back scratcher



CARIBOU BARBIE

Looks like at least some of the folks in the liberal media have a sense of humour. As of this writing, if you enter 'Bayonetta' into the search field at the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), it will bring up the biography page of conservative politician Sarah Palin.





Meticulously animated, her leathery catsuit comes to life for special attacks, its writhing fibres possessed by demon limbs that pop through portals to stomp on her foes. Cut scenes take every opportunity to zoom in on the grinding orbs of her mincing, powerful buttocks.

The production values are high across the board. This is one slick piece of work, and also a game of many firsts – never before have we seen a lock-on reticle shaped like a set of puffy red lips. They even hired a voice cast which appears to have English as their first language.

Yet there are flaws. The designers would probably complain that the biggest one is more a feature than a bug, but it still sticks out. For want of a better term, let's call it the Steven Seagal Syndrome. Just like in every Steven Seagal movie, the protagonist is seldom (if ever) stressed, flustered, challenged, or pushed out of her comfort zone. She can solve any problem without breaking a sweat. Bayonetta is even blasé about death, and will only display

save-points. In playing through a typical chapter for half an hour or so, there are many, many points where the word 'saving' will pop up in large, friendly letters. Yet it is meaningless, since it only ever works if you're continuing. Save and quit out, and next time around you'll be starting the chapter from scratch.

There are technical limitations, too. Some cut scenes are fully animated and lip-synched, but many more show the 3D character models

Sensing that all this loading could become a mild annoyance for their customers, Platinum added an excellent feature to the longer loading stages. It's simply a large empty space for Bayonetta to run around in, where you can test all her elaborate combos in a safe, hassle-free environment. At the right of the screen is a scrollable side-bar with all your combos listed. Your button-presses appear on the bottom of the screen, their spacing letting you in on how effectively you're timing them. More games should do this – again, it's a great way of distracting the player from the long and involved process set in motion every time Mr. Blu-ray and Mr. Laser get acquainted.

As of this writing, Sega has officially stated that it's 'considering' implementing a patch to tighten up those load times. We can believe that. People 'consider' things every day. Cowards consider doing stand-up on open mic night. Fat men consider losing weight. It doesn't mean those things are going to happen. Gamers had best gird themselves in advance for practicing combos endlessly in a featureless, howling void.

It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy, and weird. It takes skill to make it so well, and it takes a Japanese mindset to make it so freakishly perverted. You can't really go wrong with sex and violence, and the same is true of Bayonetta. **James Cottree**

“Cut scenes... zoom in on the grinding orbs of her mincing, powerful buttocks”

mild annoyance if you select NO at the continue screen and send her through a glowing pentagram into the pits of hell.

The tone of the music is at odds with the supposed gravity of the plot; that is, striving to avert an impending supernatural cataclysm that could 'make the Book of Revelations look like Mother Goose.' It's all cheesy, breezy light dance remixes of J-Pop and classic lounge music. Admittedly, this matches the heroine's mood, but still; it's less the score of a Summer blockbuster, and more the BGM of a soft-core porno.

One design choice that we do not fully appreciate is the inability to load from mid-level

in static poses, panning slowly against the background as their frozen mouths utter their lines. The poses in these segments aren't that exaggerated, leading one to wonder if the effect is intentional, or if they simply exhausted the animation budget.

There's quite a bit of loading, too. Loading between zones, loading up non-interactive game engine cinematics within zones, loading and unloading menus, and loading access to the weapons shop, an attractively styled art deco night club called The Gates of Hell. The latter is almost worth it for the jazz that plays while you're browsing; it's by far the best part of the soundtrack.



We don't know what you're doing but *keep doing it*

FINAL SAY:



- Smooth, stylish; the ultimate evolution of DMC-style action
- Tremendous variety of blistering attacks
- High production values
- Rock-hard difficulty, even on normal.



- Feels a little sterile
- Loooooooooading times

VERDICT: chaotic, violent, and deliriously detailed. Only a handful of technical quirks and its cocky nihilism mar the experience.

9

Dragon Age: Origins



INFO

GENRE: RPG
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: BIOWARE
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$109.95

“The good... utterly outweighs the bad”

AGON AGE

WORSE THAN BETTER THAN
OBLIVION BALDUR'S GATE II

DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS

Our Dwarven Rogue does it from behind

Blood, dragons, and grind-action with a she-mage wearing the 'Enchanted Shawl of -50 chest protection'; *Dragon Age: Origin*'s marketing campaign promises you these three things in abundance. If you listen closely to the game case, it whispers that it is a Tolkien wet dream, made digital. But the promises of dark fantasy games can oft be deceiving, brave adventurer...

The first two features are delivered in wagonloads; you'll meet many dragons, demons, and knaves before pruning their heads off in a glorious goregasm. With the third feature BioWare almost went overboard; the grinding for XP here is long and hard – plus you can also get your 'grind on' in a much more literal sense (with horny party members, or the odd tranny Elven prostitute). We're not judging your choices, of course. Do whatever gets your level up.

While *Origins* is largely upfront on the gore, oversized-reptiles, and wanton panting within, the cover of the game only alludes to other facets of its nature. For example, the game does what it says it does; it'll take you one metric 'dragon age' to finish (and those scaly bastards must live longer than the queen mother on a nuclear power cell). If you let it, *Origins* will ravenously devour 60 hours of your life, puny mortal. Mind you, most of your time

will be sucked away as you replay the game to experience six different 'origin stories' which are unique across the six races and three classes available.

These origin stories can vary quite a bit; you may choose to start off as a Rogue Dwarf second in line to the king, or you can eke out an existence at the opposite end of the social spectrum as an Elven Mage slave. Each one is a good four hours in itself and the choices you make determine your social standing in the world of Ferelden, and how NPCs will react to you much later on. Or, in more practical terms, it'll decide which party members want to give you the sack and bonk you over the head, and which ones want to get you in the sack and bonk you that way.

Once your origin wraps up, you'll soon find yourself recruited (or forced) into the ranks of The Grey Wardens (think: an elite team of adventurer bad-arses) tasked with thwarting a Mordor-esque invasion from an Arch Demon. To accomplish this mission you must recruit a party of three other adventurers, and unify the splintered forces of Men, Elves, and Dwarves in the land who are engaged in various civil wars. How you manage to do this will depend on the places you visit, the conversation choices you make, and the foes you opt to stab in the pancreas.

PlayStation
Official Magazine Australia
SILVER AWARD



↗ *insert fart joke*



↗ Kind of like *The View*, but with biff instead of blab



7 You put your right arm in, your right arm out. In, out, in, out...



Spoiler: the guy with the armour on wins

Four guys one cup

Gameplay-wise *Origins* isn't exactly the next step in RPG evolution – it's an amalgamation of all of BioWare's greatest hits. You get the ludicrously in-depth stats and equipment juggling of the *Baldur's Gate* series, the thoughtful conversing of *Mass Effect*, and the 'hidden dice rolling' battles of *Knights of the Old Republic*. Borax translation: you're gonna agonise over number combinations in menus, you'll do just as much yacking as you will do attacking, and – while the bloodshed onscreen may look real-time – you're not really crunching heads, the game's crunching numbers. Make no mistake, casual fans, if you go in expecting some *Oblivion* swashbuckling, you may just crack the shits.

That said, you don't need to be fluent in High Elf to get something out of this; there has been a reasonable attempt to make the game approachable to most console-gamers. Along with the bonus enticements of the aforementioned claret-letting and shagging, *Origins* offers a bunch of difficulty levels to either ease you into things gently, or destroy you completely. A battle on the 'casual' setting plays like a *KOTOR* click-'n-kill scenario, whereas 'nightmare' difficulty requires the use of tactical pausing, flanking, and a shrewd combination of talents and spells to survive. To help unleash said abilities, BioWare has made clever use of some handy 'hotkey' toggles on **□**, a radial menu on **□** for quick access to all of your potions and skills, and there's a comprehensive codex option that tracks everything you've ever learned or said in your adventure. This last feature is genius, because it means you can return to a quest after a long hiatus and not feel like an alzheimer's sufferer.

No matter which side of the hardcore RPG divide you stand on, absolutely anyone can appreciate how rich a world Ferelden is, and how much time and consideration has been put into its creation. Every chat with a new character is fascinating, every area you visit is overflowing with history, and there are almost too many quests to undertake. Also,

7 And Tinkerbell arrived to see it all go to spit



despite its mammoth length, the game never becomes a chore. BioWare has long since perfected the recipe for RPG crack (get more XP to get more loot, to get more XP...).

It's a shame then that when they did shoehorn the PC version across to the PS3 they didn't take time to sand off a few edges. The facial detail of some characters isn't quite up to standard, there are some bland environments, and some minor characters sound like they had their voices Skyped in.

But we digress; the good in *Dragon Age: Origins* utterly outweighs the bad. In terms of technicality and scope, it may be a bit daunting to some gamers, but, with such masterful storytelling, memorable characters, and addictive adventuring, every hour invested is paid back double. BioWare may not have reinvented ye olde RPG wheel here, but they've certainly made it larger, used sexier wood, and fitted it with the 'bladed hubcaps of +10 gore'. **Adam Mathew**

FINAL SAY:



- As long as it is enthralling
- They swapped 'morality meters' for shagging
- Super addictive looting / XP grinding



- Minor graphical glitches / ugliness

VERDICT: Impenetrable for twitch gamers, essential for patience imbued fantasy fans.

9

AVATAR

So beautiful, so dangerous...

INFO



GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL
PLAYERS: 1-TBC
PRICE: \$109.95



James Cameron hearts robots

SCIENCE FICTION

You can access an in-depth electronic encyclopedia from the main menu, with entries on all the assorted weapons, vehicles, and killer plants and animals you'll encounter on the exotic Centauri moon of Pandora. More interesting are the explanations regarding what Unobtanium is, and why the Avatars were created to mine it. Turns out this substance is worth \$20 billion a kilo back on Earth because it can run maglev trains – thus all the genocide is justified, since it helps to subsidise the most useless form of public transport ever devised.



WORSE THAN T2: JUDGEMENT DAY **BETTER THAN** TITANIC

Remember when DVDs first came out? The discs cost a fortune, the range was pitiful, and there were hardly any special features. Worst of all were the movies themselves – dusty relics like *The China Syndrome* and *Five Easy Pieces*. The studios could get away with this abuse, because they knew they had their customers over a barrel. The early adopters had just bought expensive new DVD players, and needed something, anything to watch on them. The need to show off their expensive new toys to their friends was irrepressible.

A decade later, 3D TVs are a reality. We don't own one. You don't own one. But those who got their 900 Rudd Dollars, an inheritance, and a winning lottery ticket all on the same day have splashed out, and they need something to run in 3D to show off to their friends. It doesn't matter what, so long as it's something. Anything.

In that sense, *Avatar* is aimed perfectly at its target market. It most definitely runs in 3D, and the effect is remarkable. Traipsing through the lush foliage of Pandora continuously stimulates your depth perception, though it's not quite the same as, you know, real life. The canned movement patterns of those big blue Nightcrawler/Smurf creatures, the Na'vi, make them look and feel more like characters in a stop motion animated feature. If Pumpkin Jack went after Wallace & Gromit with a flamethrower, it might look like this.

If you're playing in 2D, such tortured metaphors are unnecessary; more mundane frames of reference suffice. The maps seem huge on paper, but they're all built up from endless corridors of foliage. Each winding path through the space jungle is the same as any other; you can only tell where you are by bringing up the map. The disposable vehicles and ever-aggressive enemies are reminiscent of another Ubisoft Montreal title, *Far Cry 2*, only with more giant man-eating plants.

A few perks have been added to the over-the-shoulder style of run-and-gun action, like

GOOD ARTISTS BORROW, GREAT ARTISTS STEAL

In 1957, Poul Anderson wrote a sci-fi story about a paraplegic who, via a mental link with a blue-skinned, cat-like synthetic body, explored and eventually went native on an exotic alien planet. This has led to some speculation that James Cameron drew inspiration from the tale, just as the idea for *Terminator* was loosely adapted from two episodes Harlan Ellison wrote for *The Outer Limits*.

dodge rolls that make you leap metres in an instant. Playing through the human campaign also give you access to 'skills' buffs and special attacks that are essentially magic spells. These can heal you, or give you a temporary damage boost, or confuse enemy space dingos with a sonic pulse. You unlock access to better generic-looking machine guns via a pseudo-RPG XP grinding system.

The Na'vi focus more on melee biffs, and they get their own special attacks, including Nightcrawler-style teleportation. These racial differences are most pronounced in multiplayer, but whether *Avatar*'s varied death-match modes will tempt gamers away from *Modern Warfare 2* is yet to be seen. **James Cottier**

FINAL SAY:



- Slay wildlife and killer plants
- Play the story from two sides
- 3D!



- Game worlds feel sparse, repetitive, synthetic, toyetic
- Clunky dialogue, fetch quests
- Combat feels loose and rough

VERDICT: If you've got a 3D TV, buy it. You can afford it. If not; the derivative action cannot justify a full purchase.

7

WORSE THAN BETTER THAN
RATCHET & CLANK LEISURE SUIT LARRY

TWO HEADS

There is a multiplayer mode in here, kids: three minigames are comprised of racing and smashing into each other awaits, but if you want to keep your friends don't play this with them. Check out our review (p78) to see if the film is worth crash landing on, or best left to little green men.



PLANET 51

The place where fun came to die

We don't like being cynical, or jaded. We like games. We approach each title that makes its way in to our console with an open mind, especially movie games tie-ins that are historically crap but with the odd gem glittering beneath the poo stack (hello, *Ghostbusters*). *Planet 51*, though, is the definition of 'movie tie-in', another mouth sucking at the teat of a franchise. It is like the lunchboxes, pencil cases, t-shirts and colouring books that are all part of the merchandise machine: it does naught to progress the story, nor does it provide cred to your collection. It will only make your wallet sad.

Loosely following the plot of the movie, *Planet 51* is really a bunch of minigames tied together in an imitation of an open world. NPCs will ask you to do stuff for them, and their requests are truly banal. Mow a lawn for a few minutes, hit the mole that appears for extra time, but watch out for the sprinkler! Once you're done, ride across town to deliver

a comic, then smash the bully that steals it! Race a car and beat the tool to the finish line! Become a paperboy! Once these exercises are complete you have the chance to do them all over again in order to collect stickers, though this would be like wanting someone to punch you in the face, again and again and again.

Your character, Lem, not voiced by Justin Long, is a whiny chatterbox who's too eager to please. We're being slightly cruel here – no-one aged 10 or above is going to care about this, so the maturity of the main character is a moot point. What can't be overlooked though are the shoddy graphics, utterly abysmal lip-synching animations and sheer lack of appeal. Each section takes an age to load. Trigger a task, the game goes through two loading screens. Cut scene over, it loads again, ruining any chance of a streamlined game.

Environments go from being acceptable to poor. Sure, the world is meant to thematically recreate the 1950s, so the suburbs have houses that are one of two models. Downtown is more entertaining, with more people milling around, but your interaction with them is limited to them making comments like 'Hey, it's Lem!'

Planet 51 isn't totally lacking. Once you have a car – which, before you take it to the mechanic, needs to be driven above the speed limit or else it'll blow up – flick to the dashboard

view, where you'll see the back of Lem's head and body as he drives. Hop out of the car, approach other vehicles and you can hear their radio playing. It's a nice touch.

Don't blame Pyro Studios for churning this out to co-incide with the movie's release, nor Sega for wanting to make a buck. We must blame ourselves for buying it, for being part of the cycle of crap. If you've totally exhausted the stack of excellent games out at the moment, rent it. For a child. **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:



- Some neat graphical touches
- Takes ages to load between events
- Boring
- Does nothing new

VERDICT: Like a dry cracker for dinner, this is very bland, very boring, and not much fun at all.

5



INFO

GENRE: ADVENTURE
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA
DEVELOPER: PYRO STUDIOS
PLAYERS: 1-2
PRICE: \$79.95

LittleBigPlanet



INFO

GENRE: PLATFORM
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SONY
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$59.95



SHARE!

Go online. Check out other people's levels. The focus here is creating, sharing and experiencing what the community has to offer, and if the standard found on the PS3 makes its way to the PSP, we'll all be in for a treat. Share and share alike people!

LITTLEBIG PLANET

From the moment the intro starts, it's clear that is what it says on the box: *LittleBigPlanet*, but on the PSP. It isn't just a PS3 to PSP conversion of one of Sony's most cherished platformers-cum-digital toybox, it's a full-on title crafted for your handheld that makes only a few concessions on its way from the big screen to the small.

If you played the PS3 game, you'll be in familiar surroundings from the start. Stephen Fry narrates your and Sackboy's adventures, again, with his syrupy voice that would be easy to listen to even if he was reading the phonebook.

The story mode stages are brand new, and the only recycled bits you'll see are a few enemies using the same chassis of others from *LBP* PS3, but thematically they are set apart. At times the difficulty is a touch menacing yet always conquerable, and if you do fail you're given infinite retries at the well-spaced checkpoints. On one hand it opens a level up to explore and not to worry about starting it all over again. On the other, it does take away one aspect of the 'game' side of *LBP*, but the times you struggle most come down to Sackboy's physics.

We found that he moves just a little bit slower and is more floaty than before, and occasionally doesn't jump high enough, like he's being caught on the lip of an invisible ledge. It's rather strange and just shouldn't happen, as though the levels or enemy you're trying to land on was made just a pixel too tall. Again, sometimes he doesn't distinguish which part of the foreground or background he should be in but this is rectified by pressing up or down on the thumbstick.

It's a sound platform game, and the potential in creating your own levels is still huge. The

controls have been shoehorned somewhat in the translation, and they'll take a bit of time to get used to, having to back in and out of the Poppit menu. We did struggle with making some freeform shapes, which makes the corner tool more of a crutch, thus denting its flexibility. There isn't an option to make your own sticker, either. However, you can go online to download other people's levels and upload your own, so it's plausible to never run out of things to do. The Moon that you store your creations on has more space than you'll probably ever need.

The biggest omission though is multiplayer: it's just you and your sack for the entire time. Whether this is a bummer or a non-issue depends on how much you enjoyed this on PS3. Regardless, *LBP* has lost none of its charm on the journey from big screen adventure to handheld romp.  **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:



- Stunning graphics
- Stephen Fry's narration
- No multiplayer
- *Floaty Sackboy sometimes has a crippled jump.*

VERDICT: A mostly delightful platform experience, and the creation tools mean this is a time sink

9

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PS3

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INTERMISSION

On the screen



CINEMAS DIRECTOR: RUBEN FLEISCHER CAST: WOODY HARRELSON, JESSE EISENBERG, EMMA STONE, ABIGAIL BRESLIN IN CINEMAS NOW

ZOMBIELAND (MA15+)

Zombies, in all mediums from films and games to books, are either treated as ultra scary horrors or comedic devices. Here, Fleischer goes for the comedy angle, deftly employing Harrelson as the driving force. Harrelson plays the cowboy Tallahassee, a well-worn zombie-slayer in a world overrun with the undead. He's joined by the nerdy Columbus (Eisenberg) as they try to make it to a Californian amusement park, along with two conniving sister (Breslin and Stone).

It looks like Harrelson loves the role, taking pleasure in dispatching zombies, while the rest of the cast is superbly built up, and the chemistry between them is believable. It's this interaction between the main characters that makes *Zombieland* more than just another film with zombies. It's highly enjoyable and worthy of your emotional connection,

though it's not as though it's empty of gore and tense scenes. There's also a hilarious cameo (we won't spoil the surprise) by a bloke who takes the piss out of himself and the industry, though like the dialogue uttered by the other characters it's very tongue-in-cheek.

As a debut, this is astounding. Well worth watching multiple times, this is going to be on top 10 lists very, very soon.

THE BUZZ

What's really going on behind-the-scenes

Before it's even been released, Capcom's *Dark Void* has been snapped up by Brad Pitt's production company, Plan B. Pitt is set to develop and produce the film through Plan B, and could star in the main role of Will Grey, a cargo pilot who winds

up on the wrong side of a portal to another dimension. Could lend a little bit of well-timed cred to an otherwise ho-hum looking game.

Another game to movie conversion that comes as a surprise to nobody is a *Call of Duty*. Kevin McKidd, who

voices Captain Soap MacTavish, spoke to The New York Post, and said: "I had no idea it would be so huge, and now there are talks of a feature film... If the [film] script is good... then absolutely [I would play Soap MacTavish]."

It would be epic.

ALSO IN CINEMAS...

Planet 51 (PG)

Director: Jorge Blanco
Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Jessica Biel, Justin Long

Summer holidays mean kids movies, and this is one purely for kids. Sorry adults. Set on Planet 51, a recreation of the American '50s but whose inhabitants are green skinned beings, average teenager Lem is hot for the girl next door, Neera. His romantic intentions are quashed when human astronaut Chuck Baker lands in the neighbour's back yard.

It's very lighthearted, and while performances are more than adequate the script itself lacks the charm and comedy of a Pixar film. Laughs are generated from a lot of slapstick and self-contained gags, which will really fall flat with grown ups. Chuck, too, is a major moron. Still, there are a few references to classic alien movies, which show Blanco was trying to make this appeal across the audience spectrum, but it comes off being a bit lame.

The Informant! (M)

Director: Steven Soderbergh
Cast: Matt Damon, Scott Bakula, Joel McHale

A perfect example of Damon's flexibility, in this robust comedy about an exec, Mark Whitacre, who turns informant for the feds who are investigating a bribery scandal at his company. It'll make you squirm and laugh – a lot.



BLU-RAY**DIRECTOR** GREGOR JORDAN**CAST** HEATH LEDGER, BRYAN BROWN, ROSE BYRNE, STEVE VIDLER, DAVID FIELD, TOM LONG

TWO HANDS (MA15+)

A true Australian classic that feels like *GoodFellas* in footy shorts and thongs. To those of you haven't seen this, where the bloody hell have you been? The late great Heath Ledger stars as Jimmy, a young bare-knuckle boxer from Kings Cross who attracts the attention of local crime boss, Pando (Bryan Brown). Jimmy soon falls in with the nefarious crew, botches a simple delivery job, loses ten large swimming at Bondi Beach, and finds himself in a whole new world of shit. What follows is a desperate, and often hilarious, quest to replace the cash via (amateur) bank

robbery, and to romance the lovely Alex (Rose Byrne) while avoiding Pando's second-lieutenant, Acco.

Two Hands packs a lot of dark humour, delicately woven plot, and some home truths about Sydney's seedy underside and the unconventional nature of the criminals that inhabit it. *Two Hands* is also an endlessly quotable film, with some timeless lines coming from constant bickering between Pando's henchmen and Jimmy's Commodore obsessed, shotgun-loving bank robber mates. One of the best Aussie films available.

**EXTRAS: 6****VERDICT:**

Razor-sharp script, laugh-out-loud scenarios, and a decent piss-take of Aussie crime-culture.

9

FAMILY GUY: SOMETHING, SOMETHING, SOMETHING, DARK SIDE (MA15+)

Director: Dominic Polcino
Cast: Seth MacFarlane, Alex Borstein, Seth Green, Mila Kunis, Patrick Warburton

This new special represents the ultimate formula for The Emperor's speech patterns, and the ultimate formula for *Star Wars* piss-taking hilarity. Here's a plot snippet: while on the planet Hoth and being chased by Darth Vader (Stewie), young Luke Skywalker (Chris) has a vision of Obi-Wan Kenobi (Herbert), who tells him to go to the planet Dagobah and learn the ways of the Force from Jedi Master Yoda (Carl).

**EXTRAS: 6****VERDICT:**

Star Wars nuts will snort blue-milk out of their noses.

TERMINATOR SALVATION (M)

Director: McG
Cast: Christian Bale, Sam Worthington, Moon Bloodgood, Michael Ironside

The title certainly doesn't do what it says it does – but at least it's better than *Terminator 3*. In 2003, a Cyberdyne Systems lackey convinces death row inmate Marcus Wright (Sam Worthington) to sign his body over for medical research following his execution by lethal injection. One year later, the Skynet system is activated. Waking in 2018, Marcus soon forms an uneasy alliance with John Connor (Christian Bale) and a young Kyle Reese as they plan to attack Skynet's mainframe directly. Like Worthington's character, Salvation has some glitches in it. Bale gives an altogether boring performance, the story lacks any sense of scope, and the (admittedly cool) CGI T-800 just isn't enough to fill the void left by Arnie.

**EXTRAS: 5****VERDICT:**

This movie series could well be terminated.

5

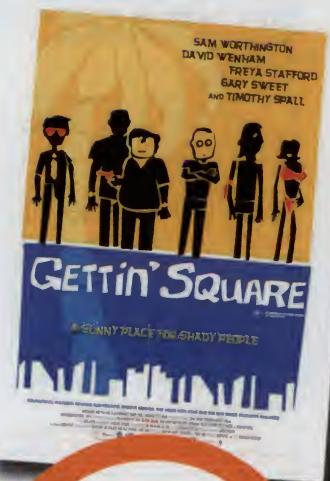
BANGKOK DANGEROUS (MA15+)

Directors: Oxide Pang, Danny Pang
Cast: Nicolas Cage

Professional hitman, Joe (Nicolas Cage), travels to Bangkok for his final assignment before retirement; he must kill four people for Bangkok gang lord Surat. Joe hires a local pickpocket, Kong, as his go-between and begins to pick off the gangland figures like clockwork, but soon finds himself getting emotionally attached to his quirky messenger, even go so far as to begin teaching Kong the business of killing. As is always the case when you break the assassin's creed, Joe gets sloppy, has his identity revealed, and his newfound friends are put into jeopardy. Honestly, this film is a bit of a waste of time. Although there are a few exciting, creatively shot gun battles, the drama is otherwise paint-by-numbers tripe.

**EXTRAS: 3****VERDICT:**

If you must, just watch the original Thai film.

4

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY... Gettin' Square

Another Aussie crime classic – hilarious!

DVD

DIRECTOR: QUENTIN TARANTINO | CAST: BRAD PITT, CHRISTOPHER WALTZ, MICHAEL FASSBENDER, ELI ROTH, DIANE KRUGER, DAVID SCHWIMMER, MELANIE LAURENT

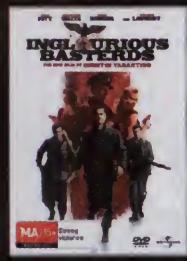
INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS (MA15+)

Tarantino turns war movies on their head with this bold, clever and wicked film. It's *The Dirty Dozen* meets *Pulp Fiction* when a group of Jewish-American soldiers known as "The Basterds" are hand-picked to drop into German-occupied France to spread fear through the Third Reich by scalping and brutally killing Nazis. With the help of a homicidal German deserter, a British special agent and under the leadership of the supremely confident Lieutenant Aldo Raine, The Basterds go about their work and become myths in the process. They soon cross paths with a French-Jewish woman, Shosanna Dreyfus, who years ago witnessed the execution of her family at the hand of Nazi Colonel Hans Landa – the Jew Hunter. She now runs a movie theatre in Paris set to be used

to screen a propaganda film to a large number of high-ranking Nazis, including Lada and none other than Hitler himself. The Basterds and Shosanna cross paths as both plan their own massacres.

The most remarkable thing about *Ingloious Basterds* isn't Christoph Waltz's incredible performance as Hans Lada (a role Tarantino felt may have been literally unplayable), but how it will constantly surprise you until the very end. For a film with so few scenes, this is quite a feat. *Ingloious Basterds* is a twisted, thrilling ride of a film that refuses to be pre-empted. You won't guess how it'll pan out.

Razor-sharp, uncompromising and sporadically brutal, Tarantino's take on WWII is an absolute belter.



EXTRAS: 7

VERDICT:

This is a no-holds-barred war movie like no other, and we reckon it's Tarantino's best film yet.

9

THE SIMPSONS 20 YEARS: THE COMPLETE 20TH SEASON (PG)

Director: Various

Cast: Dan Castellaneta, Julie Kavner, Nancy Cartwright, Yeardley Smith, Harry Shearer, Hank Azaria

So many great moments here. Like Homer starting a brawl at an alcohol-free St. Patrick's Day parade, Lisa getting a Malibu Stacy car that is a Transformer bent on destroying humanity, Homer squares off against Principal Dondelinger, and Springfield Elementary is given the distinction of "The Worst School in America" which leads the family to move.



EXTRAS: 8

VERDICT:

Arguably not as funny as it used to be, but still good.

FOUR HOLIDAYS (M)

Director: Seth Gordon

Cast: Vince Vaughn, Reese Witherspoon, Robert Duvall, Sissy Spacek, Jon Voight, Jon Favreau

Four Holidays (also known as *Four Christmases* in the US... because they're... less politically correct than... us?) is a Christmas-themed romcom staring Vaughn and Witherspoon as an unmarried, yet very happy, couple. Every December 25 they manage to concoct scenarios to avoid their divorced parents, squabbling siblings, and out-of-control kids. They soon get busted when five local news crews inadvertently capture them in a massive airport delay... wearing their sunny Acapulco holiday clothes. What follows is a chaotic, hackneyed dash to both set things right, and to visit the most annoying family members in the world (in one day).

EXTRAS: 5



EXTRAS: 5

VERDICT:

The egg nog goes sour on most of the jokes.

TYSON (M)

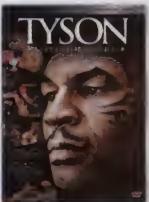
Director: James Toback

Cast: Mike Tyson

The man, the monster, the myth. This is a mesmerizing documentary that chronicles 'Iron' Mike's journey from being a naturally talented athlete to a champion who gets chewed up and spat out by the succubus that is professional boxing. Mike certainly doesn't hold back when re-telling his tumultuous career; and it is actually quite heartbreaking to watch the legend get emotional about the many mistakes made in the past.

Director Toback does a superb job by letting his subjects do all the talking, and his innovative use of a split-screen to further emphasise Mike's emotionally unstable nature. Despite one annoying omission (a bit more clarification on the nefarious Don King's role in all these events would have been nice), this is still a riveting watch and you owe it to yourself to see it.

EXTRAS: 6



EXTRAS: 6

VERDICT:

Shows reverence and disrespect at the same time.

They look like Nazis but...

The Major is British...
The Lieutenant is American...
The Beautiful Frenchines are Allied Agents!



Richard Burton
Clint Eastwood
Mary Ure
"Where Eagles Dare"

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
Where Eagles Dare

Wait, or *The Dirty Dozen*!



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Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...

LATEST

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Assassin's Creed Lineage



Billed as a short movie, this is 14 live-action minutes of glossy production values expanding on the AC universe. 789MB, though.

The Beatles Rock Band



The rest of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, for \$14.78. Our favourite's 'Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite'.

FFXIII Announcement trailer



The first *Final Fantasy* that's in HD and promises more attractive characters. Does it deliver? Hell yes.

Burnout Paradise Big Surf Bundle



Fact: *Paradise* is an awesome game (see page 94 for proof). This bundle's a steal if you don't have the original game with tonnes to do.

Metal Gear Solid



The PSN flexes its muscles, offering the classic PSone tactical espionage action title for \$15.95. Gaming history, folks.

NEWS

AD HOC THERE!

Local PSP gaming through your PS3

What do Japanese and North American PS3 and PSP owners have in common? Ad Hoc party, a free application available on the PSN that allows gamers to play Ad Hoc games – local multiplayer games – on their PSP through their PS3. It's been around for a while in Japan, but an English version suggests we'll get it soon.



LOCOROCO MIDNIGHT CARNIVAL

Now with added 'boing'

Before the game has loaded, its tone blasts out of your headphones and screen under the game menu of your PSP; this is a spooky land with ghosts, ghoulish pumpkins and malicious Oompah Loompah-esque characters, the Bui Bui, that leer at your innocent LocoRoco while a jazz track made by the devil plays in the background. A carnival? More like a nightmare.

This game, like its Bui Bui overlords, is malicious. After two likeable and feel-good titles, the focus has shifted to being more of a hard-core platform title. Its main mechanic remains: the two shoulder buttons don't control your character directly, just the angle of the world. If you want the LocoRoco to go right, tilt the world down and they'll follow. Tapping both shoulder buttons makes them jump, though time that jump right when they land and they will 'boing', leaping higher than before and leaving a colourful trail behind them.

Sadly, it doesn't feel right, being too clumsy for precise movements. The world



tilts too slowly from left to right, and there are times when it's critical to land a jump up a ramp, or off a moving ledge unless you want to fall to your death. Your characters still can't attack, so knocking flying black blobs out of the air is mostly luck. Make that jump just wrong and they'll tear a piece of your body away, leaving you smashing the shoulder buttons in frustration.

No carnival is complete with out costumes, so you can dress your Locos up in a range of hats and stuff. It's really just decoration. Although it's trying something new, *Midnight Carnival*'s hard to recommend. **Paul Taylor**



FINAL SAY:

- Slick presentation
- Catchy songs

- Imprecise controls
- Locos are defenceless



VERDICT: Newbies should check the originals, whilst veterans will find this frustrating.

6



ONLINE REVIEWS

BRAID

Ladies and gentlemen, prepare to bend your brain



We're going to go in to enemy territory, just for a moment. *Braid* on PS3 is the same game as it was a year ago on Xbox 360. If you've played and finished it, there's nothing new here. It's still brilliant, a game that takes platforming conventions and wraps them up in time-infused puzzles that will test the most out-of-the-box thinking gamer.

Graphically and thematically, *Braid* takes *Mario* and crosses it with a BBC production of Jane Austen. Your character, Tim, is dressed in a spiffing suit as he jots between worlds looking for a princess and trying to right the wrongs in his past. Each level manipulates time in a slightly different manner whilst some elements within them are immune: it might be that a key you collect will stay in your hands whilst you rewind time from the bottom of a spiky pit, or an independent platform may move at a set pace even though you're jamming the rewind function on maximum speed and Tim whizzes backwards, undoing your careful work. All this is necessary.

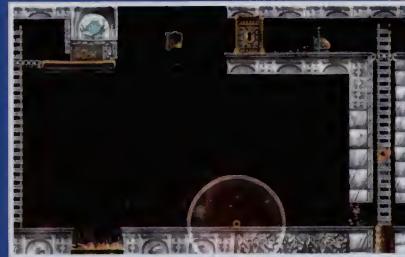
There are enemies to jump on but their placement in a stage may be pivotal to accessing a certain area. Some boss fights require a constant management of playing time backwards and forwards whilst figuring out their patterns of attack.

Controlling time is the pivotal factor

here – success depends on your using it to your advantage – and it doesn't always operate like *The Sands of Time*. Some levels are made so that your movement from left to right moves time forward, whilst going right to left reverses it. Figuring this out is part of the puzzle, and solving each stage is a magnificent achievement. Sure, there will be moments you're completely stuck, but it often forces you to experiment rather than doing what 'should' be done.

Within each stage are pieces of a jigsaw to complete, and collecting all the bits across game unlocks a speed run mode. Getting there is going to take a while; it's easy to sink a whole weekend in to this. However it is an experience to be cherished rather than endured. *Braid* is spellbinding. You will be thinking about ways to finish a level even when you're not playing, the gorgeous soundtrack still babbling at the back of your mind.

Braid is thematically profound, talking about life, love, loss, referencing dreams of doing things over to make them right. Appreciating this adds a whole other layer of complexity to your experience. Even if you ignored the story completely you'd still get more out of this than many other mainstream retail games. We can't stress it enough: this is an absolute gem. **Paul Taylor**



CHECKMATE!

Those jigsaw puzzles that you complete can also be used to interact with the level. One at the start of the game needs to be shuffled around so that you can use a platform within it to reach a previously out-of-reach section. That's the only tip you'll get from us.

FINAL SAY:

- Highly original
- A steady learning curve
- Charming graphics and sound
- Little replayability

VERDICT: *Braid* deserves success for being bold, original, and brilliant. Get it as soon as you can.

10

INFO

GENRE: PLATFORM
RELEASE: TBA
DISTRIBUTOR: HOthead Games
DEVELOPER: HOthead Games
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: TBA



WORSE THAN **BETTER THAN**
A DELOREAN | AN EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...



ONLINE REVIEWS

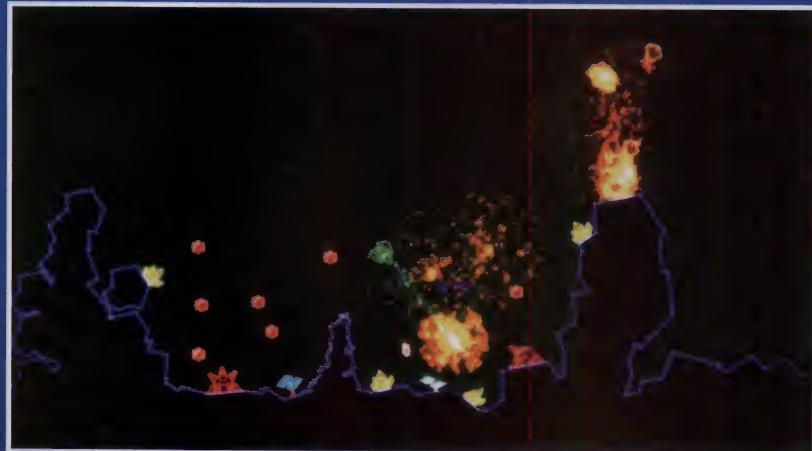
GRAVITY CRASH

No, chicken little, the sky isn't falling in

Anyone remember *Thrust*, that BBC micro game? What about *Zarathustra* on Amiga 500? If you answered 'no' to both of those questions, then welcome to Videogame History 101, as *Gravity Crash* is an example of how games used to be, when gameplay was king over graphics, except it's actually very good.

Viewed sideways on a 2D plane, you take control of a ship on various planets filled with crystals, fuel pods and enemy craft trying to shoot you out of the sky. The gravity of the world you're on affects your mobility, so while you're trying to satisfy the stage goals, whether it's destroying a certain amount of buildings, or collecting a number of crystals before getting to the exit, you have to deal with a depleting fuel tank and the ship's inertia that could toss you into the craggy rocks. Lucky, then, that you have a rechargeable shield to protect you as well as a number of special weapons.

Combat, though satisfying, isn't the draw card. What makes this so damned playable is the physics. Like a good racing game, you're piloting something that's just



on the edge of control, with the right amount of weight behind it. Including a simple but effective level editor, leaderboards and local four player modes, *Gravity Crash* is a game for all seasons.

► Paul Taylor

INFO

GENRE: SHOOT 'EM UP
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: JUST ADD WATER
PLAYERS: 1-4
PRICE: TBA

VERDICT:

Streamlined and pretty, this is an example of a simple idea being the best idea.

9



HUSTLE KINGS

'Cause hustling queens is just plain rude

Billiards on a console is a bit like playing *Monopoly* on your console: it's an activity that's best done in the flesh, though if we had to go in to the *Hustle Kings* contemporary (read: wanky) nightclubs that replace the usual character filled (read: dank) pool halls, we'll stay at home. The implausibly sparse venues with a table in the middle of the dance floor are the least likeable part of this new PSN title.

Those screenshots don't lie: this game looks gorgeous, even if our preview build did stutter a bit. After picking your painfully hip gen-Y avatar, you can go on to a career, tool around potting tricks shots, or online for multiplayer. Career mode takes you through a number of different types of games – US 8 ball, 9 ball, black ball, yellow and red – along with a few diversions – trick shots, clearing the table and so on.



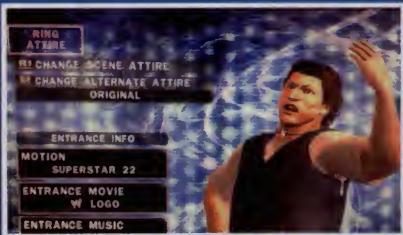
The control interface is sharp; your ball trajectory is clearly illustrated but not so much that it sucks the skill out of making an ace shot. Striking the cue ball can be done either with the analog stick, demanding smooth pushing and pulling to get the best out of your shot, or via a spinning power meter which relies a lot on luck to get it right. We'll know next month whether *Hustle Kings* is a foul shot or one to rack up. ► Paul Taylor



ONLINE REVIEWS

WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2010

Do what ya wannado, be what ya wanna be... yeeaaahhhh!



There are two definitive camps on the whole WWE thingy, you either love it, or you hate it, with very few hovering in the middle ground hedging their bets. Those who live and breathe it will be as sleep-deprived as an insomniac with a case of Red Bull as *WWE Smackdown vs. Raw 2010* offers more user created downloadable content than tweets on Twitter. True story.

Considering how popular this is in the US, we thought we'd find a lot more ranked matches, with only 20-40 available at any given time. Be warned, as most players are fanatics, you'll need your most levelled up character if you want to stand a chance, and be sure to check the conditions, as there were a surprising number of 3 vs. 1 handicap bouts, and you're not careful you'll end up copping a serve. We also got some lag here and there, which wouldn't be too annoying if it didn't occur at crucial moments, often leading to premature defeat.

However, the true meat and potatoes of *WWE SVR 2010* are by far the 'Create' Modes that allow you to tinker under the hood of your favourite wrestlers, or let you flex your artistic muscles to customise logos, tattoos, camera angles, special effects cues, storylines, finishing moves, highlight reels... the list is fairly awe-inspiring at first glance, and you can showcase your wares online and



bask in the glory and adoration with the five star rating/review system.

You can upload, download and review any of content mentioned above, and the online community has really run with the ball on this. Over the first hour or so, we saw over 70 new characters, finishing moves and even playable storylines, ranging from the wrestle-centric tweaks on the usual dramedy, to comic book heroes like Green Lantern or Superman and even characters from *Resident Evil* or *Street Fighter*. This mirrors the same sort of content as *LittleBigPlanet* without copyright limitations.

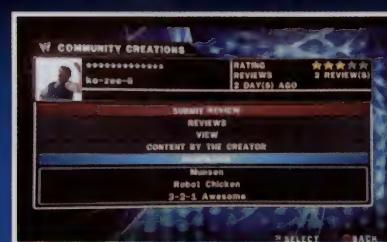
The sheer volume available adds countless hours of storylines, each with unique conditions that have to be met to continue along, even losing, and whilst some elicited a response of "meh!" others had an amazing amount of depth and care put into crafting a believable experience (so to speak) ripped right from Vinnie Mac's playbook.

Exclusive to PS3 is the ability to make a highlight reel of your rise to glory with a fairly rudimentary editing suite and then upload it to YouTube. This is the aspect that excited us the most: it's an intriguing concept to ensure a title/franchise lives on long after release date, depending on the dedication of its fanbase. **– Dave Kozicki**



INFO

GENRE: SPORTS
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: YUKE'S MEDIA CREATIONS
PLAYERS: 1-4
PRICE: \$119.95



EEKS BEWARE

When trying to work out what sort of character to show off to the world, we found ourselves with quite the quandary. Should we stick to the norm and create an unbelievably bouncy and perky sexpot, a Chuck Norris look-a-like, or some deformed alien freakshow? Then the answer hit us like a bolt of lightning. Why not play as *Robot Chicken*'s Munson, the douchebag jock who refers to himself as "King Kickass", beats down the weak, likes damaged chicks with daddy issues, disrupts *D&D* sessions and generally terrorises all nerds on the aforementioned *Robot Chicken*? Sometimes it's fun to play the villain now, innit?

FINAL SAY:

- Loads of content to choose from
- Upload to YouTube only on PS3
- A step in the right direction
- Not entirely user friendly

VERDICT: Ends up feeling a bit bi-polar. Parts worked like a dream, but we did get lag during gameplay at critical moments.

7

MODERN WARFARE 2

SPECIAL OPS GUIDE

After the campaign is over, *Modern Warfare 2*'s Special Ops mode is the real reason to keep coming back for more structured missions. Bite-sized skirmishes designed for two-players to tackle cooperatively, they're great fun – but some of them can be tough. Use Part 1 of our handy guide to obtain those star rankings, and tune in next issue for Part 2!



ALPHA

The Pit (Assault)

Completed on: Veteran

This shouldn't be a massive hassle. One player can do this in about 30 seconds if they're good enough, so two should make things a lot easier. Don't bother farting around changing weapons, just divide the targets up (left and right, basically) and keep sprinting. When you run out of SCAR-H rounds just change to your pistols. Remember, if you line up two terrorist targets you can kill both with one shot and keep moving.

Sniper Fi (Wave Defence)

Completed on: Veteran

Piece of piss really. One player should be in charge of planting claymores by the stairs and the ladder and protecting each of those from being breached by enemies. The other should unleash hell with a rifle and assume command of dropping Predator missiles once they become available after the first wave. Enemies will come down the empty street or through the motor pool area. Remaining crouched on top of the tower will keep you clear of most fire. Heal each other if necessary.

O Cristo Redentor (Elimination)

Completed on: Veteran

Just stick together. There's no time limit here so just patiently pick your way through and smoke anything that shoots at you. The heartbeat sensor will be quite handy.

Evasion (Stealth)

Completed on: Veteran

Not easy. If you don't kill quick enough the alarm will be raised and you'll likely be shot and/or mauled. As soon as you begin sprint forwards and take out the patrol rounding the bend up ahead. You should be able to get two with one shot

if you're lucky, but between the two of you putting them all down in under two seconds should be easy. A guard and a dog will appear, so have one player scoot left and take them both out from behind. That player should have a good shot on the three goons the guard and dog passed moments ago. Said player can take these three guys out with two shots. Pick your way up the hill, dividing targets between yourselves. We go for the kills, do it clean and fast. Don't miss, and don't mistake a wounded enemy for a dead one. You need them to be dead.

Go prone when looking down on the open field. Waiting for the three guards and three dogs to turn the corner and head uphill. Take a pair each (don't miss) and split the remaining one up. There are two guards just through the cutting, and two more with a dog around to the left. Split these between yourselves. There are two more on the crest of the hill you need to go over (take on each). Slide down into the village and you're done.

Suspension (assault)

Completed on: Veteran

Fight your way to the end of the bridge. Stay on the lower level when the gunship appears and keep in mind one player can be used as bait to lure the it out to be taken down by the other player (who, hopefully, has a rocket launcher). The bait should stay on the slope. Once the hell is down take out the rest of the enemies and move to the green smoke.





BRAVO

Overwatch (2P Timed Escort)

Completed on: Veteran

You need two players for this. You'll likely remember this from the original *Modern Warfare*. The better player should be on the ground – the AC-130 player can spot enemies far more easily. Take the SCAR-H with the thermal scope, but for the most part wait for the AC-130 player to clear the way. Try to laze any choppers you see; they don't show up great for the AC-130 player.

The 40mm will suit for most of the time (use the 105mm for big clumps of enemies). There are a huge amount of enemies on this map, and they'll pour out of buildings and trucks without warning. The ground player should always hide rather than fight – let the AC-130 player take out the bad guys. Simply get to the barn (the one that had the Stinger in the first game) and you'll end the mission.

Body Count (Elimination)

Completed on: Veteran

Just ignore the BTR, take an EBR-14 with the thermal scope and head out to the diner's garbage cage. One player can kill enemies who appear through the door while the player with the EBR-14 can snipe at the enemies coming in from the car park. 30 kills and you're done!

Bomb Squad (Timed Assault)

Completed on: Veteran

Head right first to the chicken market and take out the bomb. The second bomb you should take is in a building near the intersection, and the last is in the junkyard. Move fast and make your shots and you should manage. Two players are recommended.

Big Brother (2P Timed Escort)

Completed on: Veteran

Like before the player on the ground doesn't need to do much of the fighting – player two, in the chopper, will take out most of the enemies here. You'll have 10 minutes.

The ground player should hunker down behind the stone wall while the chopper player sprays the house (the one with the treehouse). The ground player should then move to the yellow house (which will trigger more enemies) and on to the ammo crate on the right-hand side of the street. The chopper will make a strafing run on the roadblock. The chopper player will need to make this count (hit the alley too) – do a poor job here and life on the ground will suddenly get difficult. After that sweep the chopper player needs to hose the main street and remain alert for the truck and soldiers that will appear behind the petrol station.

The ground player can restock at the ammo crate and move towards Nate's Diner. When the chopper starts to move, sprint to the diner and get to the garbage cage. Go halfway up the ladder and jump off (don't use the ladder inside). Try to stay out of sight if possible. Climbing the ladder will trigger the chopper to come in, but also trigger enemy troops to the roof. The chopper player can clear the roof of enemies, and the ground player should take any (safe) shots he can. Once the soldiers are dead, the ground player only needs to reach the roof and the mission will end.

Race (Driving)

Completed on:

Veteran

Accelerate as the "Go!" appears for a quick start. Do not stop, do not slow down. On the final downhill blast try to keep in the centre.

GT PSP

You have the world's most revered driving simulator in your pocket. 830 cars, 45 tracks, all on one UMD (or memory stick, if you like). The perfect portable pre-amble to *Gran Turismo 5*. Here's how to exploit it!

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

Every two game days, the dealerships that are available rotate and there'll only be four at a time. Their pattern operates on a 70 day cycle, so play through it enough and you'll come across the same cars. Of course, there aren't 280 dealerships, so the cars within each dealership change – for instance, Toyota shows off a rare supercar around the 50 day mark. Note, the car you start off with when you first boot the game dictates what dealership you're given, but ultimately you know that you can keep playing to loop back to something you may have missed.

Each game day ticks over every time you race, whether it's one, three or 99 laps. We found the exception to this is the driving challenge section, as we've completed one or two (especially in the first page), returned back to the main screen to see the same date as before. The point, though, is that if you want to race ahead to find a certain car, keep the races nice and short.

FARMING FOR CASH

Difficulty progresses thus: D, C, B, A and S, with D being the easiest. It takes a maximum of three wins to unlock the subsequent difficulty setting, so if you're looking for credits, grab a Ford GT '05 (or a Bugatti Veyron if you have the two million credits when you see it), go to the High Speed Ring on 'S' difficulty, and race it. The GT takes roughly 1:20 per lap, which is an effective way of filling your coffers.

TELL 'EM THEY'RE DREAMIN'

This depends on your play style, whether you spend your cash on high-powered cars that you want to absolutely flog and earn some credits, or wish to spend your hard-earned on some of the rarer cars to squirrel away until March. We recommend you go for the beasts, because of the 70-day cycle, so if you miss them the first time around, they'll be back.

Some hot cars seem astoundingly cheap compared to the more rare motors available. For instance, the Ford GT '02 is one million credits, whilst the more powerful and just about identical GT '05 is roughly 150,000. There are also multiple iterations of the Nissan Skyline and Honda NSX. Check out the stats – power, torque, weight – between that one-off version of a road car and the actual production model before you make a purchase. There are a lot of pre-production cars here, which is cool, but unless you're a pragmatist looking to go fast on the cheap then you're going to be fleeced.

If you do want to flesh out your imaginary car collection, wait 'til the next time around. By the time *GT5* comes out you'll have plenty to race around in.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Look at the amount of laps you're doing versus the dollar reward. Some tracks, depending on their difficulty, will increase at an unsteady rate.



For example, Twin Ring Motegi Super Speedway on D rank levels up for 6000 credits a lap, until you hit lap eight when it rewards you with an extra 250. Push it beyond that and you're wasting your time. It may be a matter of tweaking those laps to find the right balance. As a general rule, cap your laps at five for a respectable lap-to-credit ratio.

GOING THE DISTANCE

The game's biggest fault may be that there isn't a career mode. We say, make your own. Mix up the track list, and try not to get stuck on your favourite track again and again. The good thing is that, unlike the prior games in the series, you're not locked in to racing lightweight MX5s over 10 laps on a dozen tracks, so get your favourite cars and go nuts.

GET AN EDUCATION

Sure, those early driving challenges are boring (accelerate and then brake? Like, welcome to 1908, granddad). But, they are a freakin' gold mine. Blitz 'em for gold and build up your garage. Some do get hideously difficult later on (hello Nurburgring!) but at least get a bronze. Also, check out the developer replays on the challenge screens. They may give you the tip on the racing line you're looking for.

FAST AND FURIOUS

Drifting is open to abuse as well. Going down a long straight doesn't earn you credits in your drift, right? Wrong! Tap the brake and wiggle the wheel on the straight (Tokyo R246 is a good example) in full-lap drifts and you'll clock up a few valuable points. Your score is multiplied by the amount of laps you do, and the cars that are easiest to drift are four-wheel drives – think WRXs, Skylines, Ford's RS200 – with a slightly lower grade tyre on the back (S3) than the front (R1). Turn off all assists and you'll be more sideways than the Stig in no time.

STRUGGLING?

If you're finding it tough to get gold in a race, cheat. Your opponents are merely moving roadblocks to success, and can be crashed against, rammed off track and used as a buffer in tight corners. Sure, it's hardly noble nor keeping in spirit with the game, but such is the path to glory. Just ask Thierry Henry.





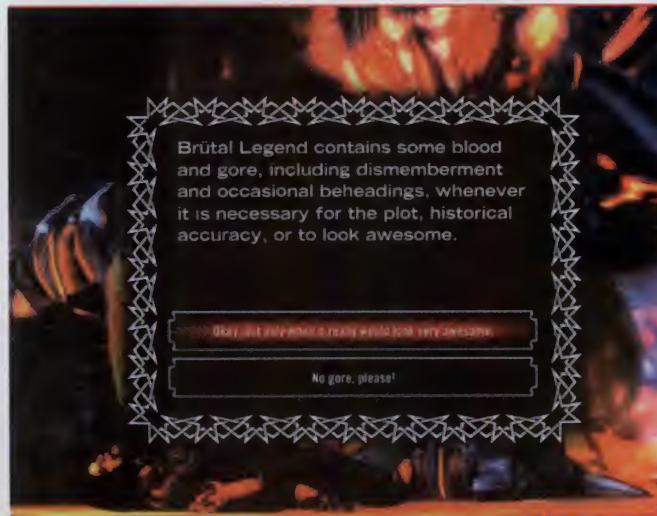
7 THINGS TO DO IN...

BRÜTAL LEGEND

This heavy metal masterpiece may have now taken a backseat to *Modern Warfare 2* and *Assassin's Creed II*, but we enjoyed every bit of it. Here are a few reasons why!

1 AS NATURE INTENDED

This may be a no-brainer, but you really ought to play the game with gore and swearing on. Seriously, the world is politically correct enough as it is without you censoring your own video games. Geez...



2 GO DRINKING WITH KILL MASTER

Beat the game, head back to Kill Master's mountain, walk up to him and press **A**. Eddie asks them if they have any more beer, and they tell him to take a seat. You're then treated to a beer drinkin' easter egg.

3 MEET THE OTHER HALF OF TENACIOUS D

You can meet KG in the game (a.k.a Kyle Gass) who is Jack Black's real-life bandmate in Tenacious D. Kyle portrays a self-pitying giant in charge of a mortar cannon. You can find him in the cannoneer secondary missions.

TROPHY HUNTER

Looking for gold, silver, and bronze in your favourite titles? Here are three to grab in *Assassin's Creed II*



THE BIRTH OF AN ASSASSIN

All you have to do is start the game and kick your baby limbs around a bit. We list this here only for those among you who hire games overnight for easy Trophy hunts, and because our own Adam Mathew has had his first child recently. Nice work mate, hope the stitches mend.



4 THE TONGUE DOCTOR IS IN

Once the credits roll, head out to the Big Iron Cross in Bladehenge. Walk up to... a certain female and tap the **A** button to get your tonsil hockey on. Watch for the fancy 'time is in fast motion' effect. Cool!

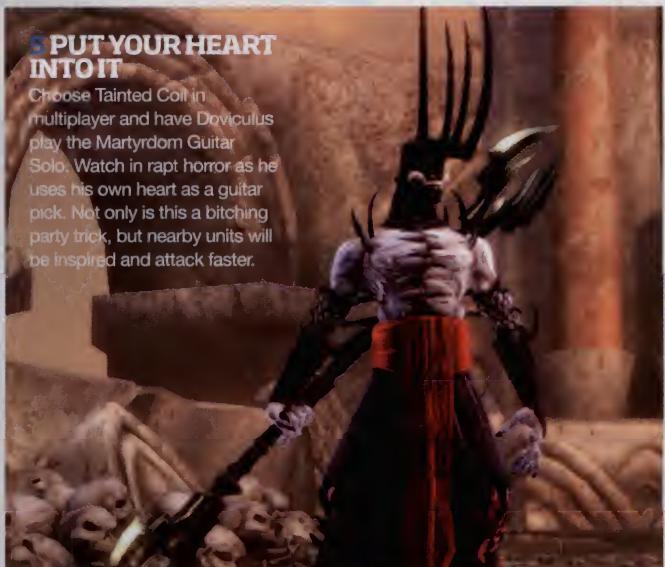


6 BITE OFF SOME DELICIOUS IRONY

Ozzy Osbourne doesn't just play the God of Metal you know. He also plays the father of an obnoxious family of bats that threatens to bite off your head. Trivia: back in the '80s Ozzy bit the head off a bat someone threw onto stage.

5 PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT

Choose Tainted Coil in multiplayer and have Doviculus play the Martyrdom Guitar Solo. Watch in rapt horror as he uses his own heart as a guitar pick. Not only is this a bitching party trick, but nearby units will be inspired and attack faster.



7 BEACH PARTY

Up in the North West corner of the map there is a stage set up and a gathering of cool folks just kicking back around a campfire. Tap **A** to hang out, and to get out a giant sized cup of beer to drink. Good tunes, good brew, good buddies... we feel great man, we feel great!



RED LIGHT ADDICT

To bag this trophy you must spend 5000 florins on these ladies of the night. A fair chunk of this will get taken up from just playing through the game; to get the remainder we recommend you dip your fingers in other people's pockets. Then you can nab the pickpocket trophy too.



MAN OF THE PEOPLE

To score this one you need to toss more than 300 florins on the ground. A general tip for any money challenge: we recommend you improve your villa and regularly return to pick up the profit. That way, throwing money away won't hurt as much.

WANTED

My precious...



BRINK

Easily described as *BioShock* but topside, this shooter wants to evolutionise control mechanisms depending on the context of your actions. Running towards a wall and looking up means you want to jump up there, but mid-animation you can jump off there and away to fire on goons on your six. Slick? Definitely.



WRC

This is being made by the mob behind *SBK Superbike World Championship*, and is set to take on *DIRT 2* for rallying cred. Fingers crossed it'll have full liveries, proper locations and, unlike Codies last effort, an actual championship. All it needs is for more manufacturers to join the Championship.



ROCKET KNIGHT

Dust off those history books and ancient Megadrive cartridges, pull up a chair, and prepare for fine platforming action on the PSN sometime in 2010. Sparkster, his jetpack and sword are about to return. Graphically overhauled, this will be a 2.5D affair, and bound to be high on nostalgia



RAGE

If history was written by videogames, the world would be dead dozens of times over by now. id's new shooter, post-apocalyptic of course (courtesy of an asteroid), shows off a brand new game engine, id Tech 5, that promises, guns, mutants and racing duster off with a light layer of RPG. Colour us interested.



METAL GEAR SOLID RISING

Ohhhh Kojima. What's going on here? Raiden, the least loved of your clan, in an adventure all of his own? You brave, brave man. Still, it ought to be genius enough to pull in the punters. Just make sure that cyborg Raiden mans up. Maybe he could ditch the high heels? What is hell is with that anyway?



RESONANCE OF FATE

It sounds a little clumsy at this stage – an RPG-ish, semi-realtime gunfight set in various, self-contained rooms – but we're intrigued. The fact that tri-Ace and Sega are punting on a world-wide release of what could happily sit in Japan means it must be ballyhoo enough to make it out West.

SIMPLY THE BEST...

The best of the best of the best of the best

ADVENTURE



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

"GTA/IV is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for – a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

10



LITTLE BIGPLANET

"By re-jigging the traditional platformer with physics and an accessible level creator, *LittleBigPlanet* becomes something delightfully simple and postmodern – a game that everyone can play, and endlessly recreate."

ASSASSIN'S CREED II

"A far more compelling story than the revolutionary original, there's more to see and do, and more ways of dealing death than before. Ubisoft has tweaked the climbing mechanic to make it feel part puzzler, but all action."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1

9

MGS4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

"An incredibly layered gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. One of the best games available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely one of the top exclusives. Buy and play this videogame now."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners PLAYERS: 1-16

10



INFAMOUS

"The city you explore, the game mechanics, the story, presentation, music and interface all conspire to play silly buggers with your perceptions of what video gaming is all about. Good for at least two playthroughs, the choice to use your superpowers for good or evil is, literally, in your hands."

DEVELOPER: Sucker Punch PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1

9



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

"Easily the best PS3 exclusive to date, *Uncharted 2* combines genre-defining visuals, high adventure and cinematic intensity like nothing before. Don't miss the original either. Get both, this second."

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-12

10



BRÜTAL LEGEND

"A hilarious and engaging story in an amazing heavy metal world. The funniest game of 2009, with an absolutely killer soundtrack to boot. If God gave rock 'n' roll to us then it is settled: Tim Schafer is God. A true must-play."

DEVELOPER: Double Fine PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4

9



FALLOUT 3

"Taking the solid base of *Oblivion* and placing it into a post apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea – and *Fallout 3* proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth and enormity of its incredible vision."

DEVELOPER: Bethesda PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1

9

SHOOTER



THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

"Worth your sweat. The combination of two campaigns equals a respectable 20+ hours of gameplay."

DEVELOPER: Starbreeze Studios
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners **PLAYERS:** 1-12

8

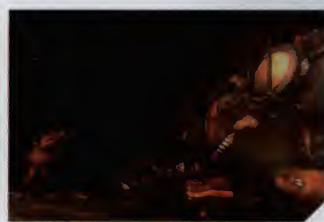


KILLZONE 2

"Visually Killzone 2 runs through the competition like a bull in the proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. Killzone 2 is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



BIOSHOCK

"As a sub-par port, minus the promised extra content, BioShock is a disappointment. BUT you'd be silly to miss out on what is undoubtedly one of the landmark games of this generation so far. In many ways, this is a must play."

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin
PUBLISHER: 2K
PLAYERS: 1

8



MODERN WARFARE 2

"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Superbly crafted, MW2 is, with its older brother, a pinnacle of this generation's games."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward **PUBLISHER:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-18

10



IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

"It's not an FPS, but shooting is all you do – in the skies above Europe. Head-turning attention to detail and intense action, it's awesome actually."

DEVELOPER: Gaijin Entertainment **PUBLISHER:** AIE **PLAYERS:** 1-16

9



BORDERLANDS

"Borderlands starts out great and only gets better from there. It takes the best elements of RPGs and shooters and fuses them, and it's quite simply the most rewarding co-op to date."

DEVELOPER: Gearbox Software **PUBLISHER:** 2K **PLAYERS:** 1-4

9



CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR

"Superior in many ways to even Modern Warfare, this is a surprisingly superlative piece of software. Powerful, well-produced, stuffed with violence – it's fantastic. The action is relentless, the visuals buttery-smooth, the intensity savage – we love it."

DEVELOPER: Treyarch
PUBLISHER: Activision
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



HOST-BUSTERS

"Well-honed and accessible controls, some spectacular visual effects, excellent pace, great level design, incredible attention to detail – all of these essential traits combined with the Ghostbusters universe and come together for a thoroughly addictive experience."

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-4

9



FAR CRY 2

"At times overstretching itself, Far Cry 2's breath-taking ambition can often be its undoing, but it's still one of the best shooters out there. Plus, setting stuff on fire is still a ridiculous amount of fun."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal
PUBLISHER: Ubisoft
PLAYERS: 1-16

8

TOP 5

THINGS FOR DRAKE TO FIND



YOUR REMOTE CONTROL

This quest could take minutes, days or even go on forever. We see this breaking the mould and being a series of adventures, episodic DLC style.



HAROLD HOLT

An adventure on our soil and, err, sea-bed, that would take Drake all the way to Russia to and back. Underwater action, fistfights on subs? Sounds stellar.



ATLANTIS

This aquatic adventure searching for the sunken city would give Drake the chance to lock gills with mermaids, Tom Hanks-style – but with a hell of a lot more cool. Elena, it's not cheating when she's half-fish.



GOLDEN FLEECE

Drowned in myth, the Golden Fleece is MIA. Its fate is perfect fodder for Drake and co., and the adventure to reach it – clashing rocks, dragon's teeth and so – would be awesome squared. He would need to shear it from a golden sheep.



HOLY GRAIL

Drake's hardly cautious about pulling the trigger and the quest for the Holy G. wouldn't be complete without Nazis to smite. Hell, toss in some zombies and we're complete. That said, he's taken them on already...

INDEX

All the games that matter on PS3!

MAGIC MOMENTS



GAME: Gran Turismo HD
CONSOLE: PS3
YEAR: 2007

THE MOMENT:

Although it was ultimately a tech demo, *GT HD* was a mighty feather in the cap for early PS3 adopters. Here was a taster, a crab claw to the sushi roll that became *GT5 Prologue* before the full Bento box drops in March. It was a demonstration not only of the power of the PS3 as it showed off a handful of high-end, glossy motors on a lush mountain track, but also of Polyphony Digital, the PlayStation Network, and Sony in general. It opened up a lot of people's eyes to what could become, the possibilities of a networked system of showing off accomplishments and competing for attention. And it was free.

Free, and with Ferraris. Well, one Ferrari, and the usual taster of hot Japanese cars, rally legends and a total useless Suzuki. If this shrunken *GT* was to provide an indication of what the future held, it was to show that *Gran Turismo* was on track to be *Gran Turismo*: stunningly beautiful, packed with cars (even if some them were as desirable as a packet of spent fireworks), smooth and particular about what would be simulated. Anal, then. All the hallmarks were there, plus one. The drift trial.

This moment came a long time in to this demo; earning the tuned cars and drift trial after working through the selection of normal cars and time trial. A quick tune of the rear tyres to make them more slippery than the set on the front and your motor choice would career around a corner, screaming. That long right hander was damned tricky to make in one go, but after nailing it with a slightly boxy 4WD Skyline, we were hooked. It was a watershed moment, blissful every time the trill of flags racked up matched with the shrill squeal of tyres on asphalt. It was drift done right.



RACING



Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub *MotorStorm*'s face in its glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock **PUBLISHER:** Madman **PLAYERS:** 1-16

9



"Anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far. Well worth checking out."

DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-16

8



"To appreciate *Sega Rally* you'll have to continually remind yourself that it's a deceptively life-like caricature of a hardcore rallying experience. Not brain surgery, but it delivers the fun in big muddy spades."

DEVELOPER: Sega Driving Studio **PUBLISHER:** Sega
PLAYERS: 1-6

9



"*DIRT* 2 is snazzy, but it's too boneheaded for its own good, has few real rally cars and very little proper rallying. The original *DIRT* remains a far better example of a next gen rally game. More varied and far less US-centric."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners
PLAYERS: 1-16

9



"This bastard rock n' roll son of *V8 Supercars* and *Colin McRae: DIRT* is hot. Your lower jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take five. And you'll start to drool. Shame it ditched its roots though, and the V8 DLC Codies promised has vanished."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners
PLAYERS: 1-12

9



NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

"*SHIFT* bucks the trend of all-American games, and treats you as an intelligent racer. Whether you want to get under the bonnet and tinker, or even just race with what you're given, this truly is a must-have package. It's also damn pretty and very, very noisy."

DEVELOPER: Black Box
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-8

9



MOTORSTORM

"In our humble opinion *MotorStorm* was the best launch title on the fledgling PS3 – and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next-gen racing as a platform upon which smart AI and terrain deformation could thrive, *MotorStorm* reinvented the arcade racer."

DEVELOPER: Evolution Studios
PUBLISHER: Sony
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

"Within its niche sub-genre, *MC: LA* reigns supreme. Well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, *MC: LA* manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off *Need for Speed Undercover* at its own game."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego
PUBLISHER: Rockstar
PLAYERS: 1-16

7



BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the thoughtless removal of splitscreen and the lack of a retry button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome."

DEVELOPER: Criterion
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-16

9

MUSIC & SPORTS



ROCK BAND

"A triumph. Harmonix has found the formula for a truly great music game – immaculate presentation, great tunes and a job for as many of your friends as possible. You wanted the best, you got the best."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 09

"Golf, for most of the populace, is about as exciting as watching paint dry in an old folk's home, so it's testament to EA that this game actually works well."

DEVELOPER: EA
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-16

8

SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, SKATE 2 is undoubtedly one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime. Massively addictive."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-8

9



FIFA 10

"With its new momentum physics, stellar visuals, and engaging gameplay, 2009 was the year that the *FIFA* franchise managed to leap the perennial hurdle that is *Pro Evolution Soccer*. *FIFA 10* is even better. Buy it, become obsessed."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-20

9

10



FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

"A spectacular game. Deeper and more technical, *Fight Night Round 4* recreates the sweet science more faithfully than ever before. Remarkable detail, incredible animation."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada
PUBLISHER: EA
PLAYERS: 1-2

9



STREET FIGHTER IV

"Capcom has been in the virtual brawling business longer than anyone, and with its vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay, *SFIV* is worth paying double for. Acquire on sight."

DEVELOPER: Capcom PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

10

UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

"It was trumped by *Fight Night Round 4*, but it's taken the arrival of *WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010* to remind us just how tight *UFC 2009* really is. A technical, rewarding fighter that looks bloody unreal."

DEVELOPER: Yuke's
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
PLAYERS: 1-2

8

GUITAR HERO METALLICA

"*Guitar Hero Metallica* improves upon *GH* in a number ways – a more user-friendly HUD, superior presentation and more attention to detail. Great tracklist too, including 'Tuesday's Gone' by Lynyrd Skynyrd."

DEVELOPER: Neversoft
DISTRIBUTOR: Activision
PLAYERS: 1-4

8

VIRTUA TENNIS 2009

"More of a tweak than a brand new experience, *Virtua Tennis 2009* is still the most enjoyable tennis game available today. Along with player creation tools, the biggest plus is the chance to play in the Davis Cup."

DEVELOPER: Sumo
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA
PLAYERS: 1-4

8

DJ HERO

"A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick once you've played it. Utterly addictive, and great value when you consider it's chock full of great mixes you'll never hear anywhere else. An excellent game, and great for parties."

DEVELOPER: Freestyle Games
DISTRIBUTOR: Activision
PLAYERS: 1-2

9

TOP 5

TECHNOLOGIES WE WANT



3D GLASSES

Virtual reality has been in public discourse since 1876. Now all you need is a 120Hz telly, a slightly dorky pair of specs, and about a year to save your dollars. Bingol! You'll be ducking for cover in the next *Call of Duty*.



PLAYSTATION MOTION CONTROL

Used in conjunction with the PSEye camera, this has potential to open up games beyond a standard controller. Sure, Nintendo have been there before, but we're anticipating something big from this.



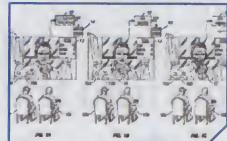
LED SCREENS

Consuming less power than an LCD screen and with a wider colour range, these stick-thin screens are spectacular to look at. Plus, they're kinder to the Earth when you do have to toss 'em.



PS CLOUD

Really, there's little we know about this, but best bet is an on-demand game service using a tiny box in your living room that shouldn't cost half as much as PS3. This is years off yet.



INTERACTIVE MOVIE TECHNOLOGY

Filed for by SCEA, this could see your avatar involved with the action on screen. For example, booting a thesp in the bot with your boot. The potential for slapstick is mind boggling.

INFAMOUS

Wild 9



WILD 9

Born to be wild

Does anyone even remember this game? We recall that everybody seemed to be banging on about it for a week or two upon its release, but then it just disappeared forever.

The loudest of these bangers was likely Dave Perry, then president of Shiny Entertainment. Still, while *Wild 9* was kind of cool we've never been able to figure out where the hype came from.

Wild 9 actually began life as a Sega Saturn title a few years before it made its way to PlayStation in late 1998. The *Wild 9* is a group of rebels working at bringing down the rule of Karn, lord of an industrial dystopian galaxy. At the beginning of the game the group is ambushed and captured – all except for their

by grabbing them with the Rig and slamming them into the ground until they die. You can also drop them into various deadly parts of the levels that will grind them into green mince.

The visuals are 3D, but *Wild 9* is a side-scroller. There are a few twists to break up the levels (which there are only 10 of) including jet-bike, beast-riding and free-falling sections, but there's quite a bit of recycling here. The art style is great, and it's far more brutal than you'd anticipate – there's just not that much to it.

Anybody out there who remains convinced that games were longer 10 years ago really ought to play *Wild 9*. It's short. Really short, actually. A lot shorter than its big-name platforming peers at the time. You'd be hard pressed to see how anybody could have

justified selling it for the same RRP of the likes of *Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped*, for instance. *Wild 9*, then, was probably a game that was just a fraction ahead of its time. We often say the true gauge of success in this industry is

a sequel, and *Wild 9* certainly didn't get one of those. What could they have possibly called it? *Wild 9 2*? That doesn't work. Then it's just *Wild 9 2*, which sounds like an aftershave, or the latest instalment of a (very) long-running video series featuring university girls doing stuff that'd make their fathers sad.

“You dispose of your enemies by... slamming them into the ground”

leader, Wex. He sets about rescuing them from each of the planets they're interned upon.

The gimmick is Wex wields a weapon called the Rig. Simply put, the Rig is a tractor beam-style device he can use to shift large items around and grab enemies to torture.

Yes, torture. You dispose of your enemies



INFO

CONSOLE: PLAYSTATION
GENRE: PLATFORM
DEVELOPER: SHINY ENTERTAINMENT
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: US
CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE: \$10 (EBAY)

On ice for a decade *Wild 9* probably could've killed as a PSN title. A bite-sized, super-violent platformer that you can blitz through in a few hours? People would pay 10 or so bucks for that. As it stands, it's just another example of a good game that went wide of its target. **Luke Reilly**



THE WEIRDEST THING WE DISCOVERED RESEARCHING THIS PIECE

Dave Perry, former head of Shiny Entertainment, once went to Michael Jackson's ranch. Jacko, who according to Perry was a gamer, wanted him to come up to Neverland and talk to him about games. When he arrived Jacko handed him a black garbage bag and asked him to put it on. Shortly afterward Neverland staff appeared with a huge pile of eggs, and a giant egg fight followed. Weird, right?



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